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(Hansard)**

Wednesday 9 April 2008

Mercredi 9 avril 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 9 April 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 9 avril 2008

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET MEASURES AND
INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008
SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES
ET L'AFFECTATION ANTICIPÉE
DE CRÉDITS

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 8, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 44, An Act respecting Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters / Projet de loi 44, Loi concernant les mesures budgétaires, l'affectation anticipée de crédits et d'autres questions.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? I recognize the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I must say I'm a little off balance here. I was caught slightly off balance with this 6:45 recommencing time of the evening sitting. You see, when we came back in the fall—you remember that, Mr. Speaker—we talked about a family-friendly place, some new rules. There was going to be a new sheriff in town, as they say; and things were going to change around here, as they say. One of the things that was going to change was that we were going to do away with these night sittings, because out in TV land, you have to recall, I say to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, all of those people out there are not that interested in watching what we have to say at this time of night.

You see, tonight, the NHL playoffs are starting.

Hon. Jim Watson: The Lumber Kings.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Ah, the Lumber Kings, I say to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Pembroke Lumber Kings—now that is a hockey team.

It takes me to another thought, just slightly off the topic for now. When you want to talk about the difference between small-town Ontario and the big city—David Miller's Toronto or, maybe not too far down the road, George Smitherman's Toronto; that's a possibility. The Minister of Health actually can't seem to make up his mind. One day he's talking about, "Maybe I'm going to take a run at being the mayor of Toronto." I know the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing was a mayor

of a major city in this province before. He was a mayor of the city of Ottawa. He was a good Conservative at that point. I don't know what happened between Ottawa and here, but in those days he was making a lot of sense, and increasingly, I regret to say, he's making less and less. I'm not saying I don't like the man. I'm not saying he doesn't make a contribution here. But he was far more logical and more in tune with the people of Ontario when he was a Conservative.

But anyway, the Pembroke Lumber Kings—
Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I don't want to lose this thought, even if the member for Peterborough wants to heckle, and I know he loves to heckle. I do want to talk about those Pembroke Lumber Kings. I was going back to that thought about the difference between small-town Ontario and the big city. Right now, you've got Smiths Falls and Pembroke in the CJHL finals. Those two towns—Pembroke is a city, a small city, but when you go to those rinks for a hockey game, they're full. When you go to the rinks of some of those other teams, the only people who are watching the games when the other teams play at their home games are the girlfriends and/or the parents. But in Pembroke, it's like religion. Everybody is there. I have had the honour on several occasions to sing the national anthem at a Lumber Kings game. The atmosphere is electric in that building, and they are just ready for that puck to drop. Small-town Ontario, that's what we always have to remember. At one point, this was small-town Ontario, and now it's dominated by a government that is dominated by Toronto.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, that's true, and even if the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing wants to say, "I'm from Ottawa"—let's talk about Ottawa for a minute.

I'm glad I thought of Ottawa, because in this recent announcement—and I'm just going to take off this device here for a moment. I have some empathy for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing because he's in a tough position. But there's old Ottawa that took this \$14.6 million, and they're calling it a "snow and slush fund" because, you see, on the one hand, they're saying that this money has to be spent on municipal roads and bridges. The minister, the member from Ottawa West–Nepean, was in the newspaper; he was ticked. At least, he says he was ticked. But you never know. You also have to remember that this is politics and they are the party of Dalton McGuinty. So he's upset, or at least he's feigning being upset, about Ottawa taking this \$14.6 million. Do

you know what they're going to do? They're going to put it into the snow fund. It's a slush fund—the people of Ontario got snowed. That's what happened. It's \$14.6 million.

1850

I don't know how much time I've got here, Mr. Speaker, but there is never enough.

This is the budget bill, Bill 44. I'm going to start over and say this really slow: \$96 billion. In 2003—the 2002-03 budget, when the spending in this province was \$68 billion—if somebody were to have said, “Do you know what? In five years, they are going to be spending \$96 billion,” I believe the reaction of that person would have simply been, “That's \$96 billion?” There isn't possibly anything left in this province that they wouldn't have taken care of with that kind of money. If they were doing the job right, they would have it all taken care of. But what have they done with that money? They have built an insular wall around the government, this gigantic group of bureaucratic advisers and everything else. Half of the jobs created in this province are in the public service. I want you to keep that figure, \$96 billion, in mind. All of this spending—a 48% increase in spending since this government took office. The taxpayers out there have to ask themselves a question: “What are they doing with my money?” It's not rocket science. That's a \$26-billion increase in spending per year under this government. You would think there would not be a problem left.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Not enough. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal are on House duty tonight, as you can see. I don't know; maybe they're not hockey fans, or maybe they're Leafs fans. Hey, yeah, you're a Leafs fan, aren't you? Say it in Ottawa. Say you're a Leafs fan in Ottawa. Tell the truth.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: They're here for the sole purpose of trying to heckle this speaker.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: It can't be. Say it's not so.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's got to be.

We want to talk about their spending and their taxation and their lack of respect for taxpayers' dollars.

Margaret Thatcher, the Iron Lady, had a saying, and it was something to the effect—and I'll only paraphrase—that, “Government can give you everything, but only if it takes everything from you,” and that's the philosophy of this government. They want to put everything into public services, the public service, the bureaucracy, but they want to take everything from you. They're not going to be happy until the only thing left in your pocket is lint. That's the philosophy of this government. So when they've got all your money and they can't take any more, then they're going to have to come to the icy realization, “You know what? We've taken all the people's money. We've taxed the businesses out of existence. Who's going to create the jobs?”

One of the problems that I see this winter, if you go around this province and ask some of the older folks or ask some of the younger folks who have children, who are having a tough time in this province—they can't go to their employer and say, “We need a raise. We need more money.” You know what the employer's saying to them? “I don't have the money to give you one because the Dalton McGuinty Ontario Liberal tax-and-spend government is taking everything from me, and they won't give me a break. How am I supposed to give you something?” But when that oil bill comes in—and the price of oil this year is \$1.08 or \$1.09 a litre; I'll have to check my last oil bill—it's up about 30% under Dalton McGuinty this winter. They're asking themselves, “Where's the help and where's the relief for the low-income senior or the low-income young family trying to raise two or three children here in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario?” There is no relief. Those same employers who can't give them a raise: Sooner or later, under this strangling environment that they've been put into under this government, those same people who can't get a raise from their employer may be getting a layoff slip.

That could be the legacy of Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, because they just don't get it. They believe that if you just keep taking people's money and spending it, they're going to be happy. Whatever became of the idea that maybe the people would do a better job of spending their own money? That's lost on this government.

History looks like it wants to repeat itself, because, if you remember the David Peterson government of 1985-90—

Hon. Jim Watson: Those were the good old days.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing says, “Those were the good old days.” Yes, if you maintain the philosophy that this current government believes in. Those were the glory days of tax-and-spend Liberalism. They squandered some great economic years in Ontario by taking everything they could and pouring it into whatever they thought somebody might like because, you see, they see the practice of taking taxpayers' money and spending it on something that they like—that vote-buying practice that they think, in the end, works, and it does, in the short term. You remember: David Peterson in 1987 won 92 out of 130 seats in this Legislature because he bought them with your money.

This government uses the same philosophy. But, like everything else, the chickens come home to roost. And there is the catch. Some day, there's going to be a day of reckoning, when the taxpayer who has been beaten up, whipped and robbed by this government simply has nothing left to give.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask you to withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw—that has been beaten, whipped and mugged by this government, almost in a purse-snatching episode. They just drive in and—

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask you again to withdraw that unparliamentary language and not persist in trying to rephrase it.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw. I apologize if anything I've said is unparliamentary, because I'm doing my very best.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Don't apologize, just withdraw.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw.

So, all of this money that has been taken away from the taxpayer: Eventually they can give no more. You can't get blood from a stone, and even a sponge eventually gets wrung dry. That's what they're doing to the taxpayers and the businesses in this province.

I'm not going to stand here and say that investment is not a good thing. It is, but investment has to be well targeted, well planned and well positioned to garner additional investments.

Of course, the people on the other side of the House are going to get up and they're going to have their rebuttal and they're going to have their remarks. Do you know what they're going to say? Just mark these things down; they'll come true. They're going to say, "Those guys over there, those are the Tories who want us to take X number of dollars out of health care and X number of dollars out of this." I want to make one thing crystal clear. At no time since the Liberal government was elected, and at no time since they instituted their illegal and regressive health tax, has any member of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario ever stood up and said that they would cut health care spending in this province. What we would do—and I want to make this very, very clear—is manage the financial resources of this province so that those investments could be made without taking every single penny and every incentive and taking every hope away from business that operates in this province.

How do you need to take more money from the people when your revenue is already up 48%? If revenue was up 68%, would they spend that too? Is that the kind of management—they're like the kind of person who wins a lottery, and out the door they go. You know what they're doing; and 30 days later they've got nothing. It's just like a frenzy when you put money into a Liberal's hands. They've just got to go somewhere and spend it—no planning.

They are going to tell you that the money they invested in infrastructure—there's not a municipality in Ontario, certainly not a municipality in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, that is not happy and pleased with the money they've received.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Absolutely. But they also have asked me, "Why are we not getting some kind of a sustainable funding plan? We want to be able to go to our ratepayers and say, 'This is our infrastructure plan for the next five years,' not 'Whenever the Liberal government feels like it, they're going to throw something our way.'" That's not the way you operate a business. It's certainly

not the way you should operate a government. Investments in key areas like infrastructure are extremely important, but the process that this government used in order to get that money out the door—do you think they didn't know five months ago that they were going to have this money? They knew five months ago they would have this money. Why didn't they talk to the municipalities? Why didn't they sit down at ROMA and say, "Look, this is what we have"? They were able to put stuff in their budget that they had to have known weeks, maybe months, before. That's not the kind of sleight of hand that municipalities are looking for. They're looking for a commitment from their provincial partner that ongoing, sustainable funding will be the order of the day, not the Liberal vote-buying scheme at the end of the year.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I have a little concern. I like the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, but he started out by talking about big cities, small towns, and then he started attacking Toronto a little bit in his own way. I've got to tell you I get a bit concerned by those things because I grew up in Toronto, just about 10 minutes away from here, with a brisk walk 15—Shaw Street, Montrose, Delaware, all downtown—and I kind of like Toronto. I don't think we run everything, really. So when I feel attacked by so many of the folks outside of Toronto, I then wonder, maybe we should secede from the rest of you. I'm thinking, how many of you believe that we should—

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I wonder whether my good friend John, from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, thinks that maybe Toronto should be its own province. If that is true, I'm willing to vote for that. If you have an opinion in that regard, please let me know.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Jim Watson: Can I have his extra 53 seconds?

I'm always amused by the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke because he is a member who has one of the worst cases of political amnesia in the Legislative Assembly. He's forgotten what happened during the Tory years when he talks about treating municipalities with respect. What did they do with the land ambulance service? Download. What did they do with ODSP? Download. Public health? Download. Drug benefit plan? Download. Housing? Download.

What did we do when we got into power? We've uploaded ODB and ODSP. That, when fully implemented over the course of the next few years, will save municipalities \$935 million. We're now at a 50-50 cost sharing arrangement with land ambulance, a 75-25 split with public health, and we have a very successful fiscal review taking place to look at the whole relationship between the municipal sector and ourselves.

Let me quote Peter Hume, an Ottawa city councillor, who sits on the fiscal review. At the pre-budget consultation he said that "we at the city of Ottawa have been

greatly encouraged by the efforts made by the government of Ontario since it was elected. After years of downloading, the Premier and his government have been clear that the current situation that leaves property taxpayers for underfunded and downloaded provincial programs is unfair and cannot continue.”

Mayor Larry O’Brien said, “The province of Ontario has never in its history been as good to eastern Ontario and Ottawa as it has been over the last two years while I have been mayor.

“Our relationship is warm, it’s co-operative and it is moving to the future. All I can say is I am very, very happy the city of Ottawa is working in this manner with the McGuinty government because they are coming through for the city of Ottawa.”

I’m proud of the relationship that we have developed with the municipal sector. I look forward to strengthening that in the years ahead.

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Mrs. Julia Munro: Two points I would like to make: The question of the bill that accompanies the budget in terms of Bill 35 demonstrates that complete lack of understanding of the importance of long-term funding for municipalities, and the fact that infrastructure is a long-term commitment. I think it’s very interesting that the Minister of Municipal Affairs should refer to this. In my community, when people talk about infrastructure and the need for it, in looking at the extension of the 404 just between Mulock and Green Lane and the number of jobs that are there, even on only one side of the highway, it demonstrates the importance of being able to have long-term funding and an understanding of the importance of that infrastructure.

I want to also comment on some of the remarks made by the Minister of Municipal Affairs. When he’s talking about the downloading, somehow there’s part of that trade that always gets forgotten whenever the Liberals are talking about this. In my area, 66% of the dollar was in education. That opportunity to take education—it turned out to be only 50% of it, but that was according to what the municipalities of the day wanted. But no one talks on the other side, on the government side, about the fact that that was lifted. That was the part of the municipal budget that was rising at the greatest increase. I think it’s important to include that half of the equation.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I have to say that I find the debate this evening very, very interesting because on the one hand the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke brought some interesting points to the table, and then the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing tried to justify this budget, pretending that it actually does what it needs to do for municipalities. The bottom line, everyone knows, is that after the end of this term of government for the Liberals, after being about eight years in office, they still won’t even have dealt with a third of the downloading problem, and that’s not including all the things they’re now foisting onto municipalities in terms of responsibility.

I have to tell you, affordable housing is still a huge problem for municipalities; social services costs are still a huge problem for municipalities. If the economy is going the way we think it’s going, the whole cost of social services is going to become an enormous problem in Ontario. Similarly, the entire issue around ODB and ODSP: It’s not fast enough and it’s not enough actual impact to make a huge difference for municipalities, particularly when they’re staring down an economic downturn.

The bottom line is that the government still is not dealing with issues like court security costs, which should not be funded out of police budgets. It still sits with municipalities. This government should take care of provincial court security costs. It shouldn’t be up to municipal police forces to leach off of their budgets to take care of that. The reality is that the government is simply not really doing enough for the municipal sector. Instead, what they do is they tell them, “Maybe with a hope and a prayer, if we happen to have a surplus in any year, you might be able to actually get a little bit of extra capital dollars.” They said that, of course, and the cruel joke was that they’re not projecting a surplus. The crueler joke is that we find out the bill doesn’t even talk about municipalities.

So I find it quite strange that this government wants to brag about its record with municipalities when it’s very poor.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time available for questions and comments. I’m pleased to return to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who has two minutes to reply.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate the comments from the member for Trinity–Spadina, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the member for York–Simcoe and the member for Hamilton Centre. I know that the member for Peterborough wanted to get up, but he was having trouble with the count.

I just did want to make a quick comment on the member for Trinity–Spadina. I don’t know if he’s advocating for a separation here or not. I’m not, but perhaps he wants to be Premier of the new province that he’s advocating for. I don’t know. “George for mayor; Rosie for Premier.” Maybe that’s the story; I don’t know.

Anyway, there seem to be a lot of comments with regard to Bill 35 here as well. That’s another one of the government’s shell games, where they’ll promise that any surplus over \$600 million or \$800 million is going to go to municipalities. When you read the fine print, they could actually give that money to a cricket club. Under the legislation, they could give that money to a cricket club. They talk about working with municipalities, but this is the kind of thing they throw out there. The fact is, if there’s a surplus exceeding the \$600- or \$800-million threshold, they could actually give that money to another cricket club.

You’d think that they would have learned, with the slush fund that they perpetrated last year—they handed out money like it was going out of style, with no account-

ability whatsoever. Now they actually want to pass a law and a bill that gives them the right to institutionalize it.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Bill 35.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Bill 35—we're talking about the budget here, but people talked about Bill 35, so we're just going down nine place points. Here we are: Bill 35. It's all about the mismanagement and the—I was going to say a bad word there, but I caught myself. It is all about this government's willingness to do anything and say anything and spend your money in the worst ways possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's a wonderful opportunity to be here, to debate, to talk to the so many Liberal friends that I have on the other side, with whom I have such a close relationship on all sides.

Welcome, citizens of Ontario who are watching. It's 7:15; we're on live. I want the folks watching to put away the candy; it's not good for you. Full of sugar and full of calories—not good for you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Somebody should pass a law.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Very low in nutrients. Somebody should pass a law. I'm telling you, the Minister of Health Promotion is right here, and she's listening very closely, because she said in relation to the bill that I just proposed on Monday, "It's an interesting bill; it's stirring up debate," and I think she was sort of saying, "And we're going to do something about it soon." So put away the popsicles, the chocolate bars, the potato chips and all that crap and get out your carrots, get out the rapini, the broccoli, the apples and all that verdura, and start—with a glass of wine—enjoying this show. That's what this is about.

I've got a couple of things to say to my friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. The last remark that he made—I completely agree with him, and I'm going to talk about it briefly. I do not agree with Tories when they talk about cutting taxes as the solution to everything. It's completely wrong, misguided; politically, ideologically wrong. They are so full of this ideological crap; they never get enough of it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Take your seat. I'm going to ask the member to refrain from using that sort of colourful language. Recognize that people are watching.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They overdose on this kind of ideological stuff on a daily basis. You have to get the needles away from these guys. Where I disagree with my colleagues—with whom I'm like this, often—is on this particular issue, because it is a one-trick pony. It doesn't work. If you, my friends, Conservatives—there are so many of you here tonight—if you look at Sweden and Norway, Denmark, and so on, these are the countries that tax much more than Canadians do, much more than Americans, even more than some other European friends that are so close to them, and they are numero uno when it comes to quality of life.

In all aspects of quality of life—job creation, good jobs, benefits, good pensions, good leave of absence for mothers and fathers, great child care—they do this, my fellow Liberal friends, in a regime where they tax much more than you and ever so much more than these people, and it works.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Whoa, whoa, I can't hear. Sorry?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Tell them about the suicide rate in Sweden.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And the connection is?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: It's the highest in the world.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And so you're saying?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Well, you're saying they're the best country—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My friend here is going to speak for 20 minutes soon on Liberal ideological pragmatism. It should come up very soon. I'm looking forward to that speech.

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The point is, we don't agree with them, because if they were right, then these Nordic countries should be collapsing under the weight of over-taxation, and they're not. They're doing very well. Something is good about what they're doing, where labour, corporations, industry and government work together for the—shall I dare say?—common good. For the citizenry of those countries, they seem to be doing okay.

Yet Liberals wouldn't talk about increasing taxes, cannot talk about increasing taxes, because, should they dare, they would be whacked again and again by many, especially Tories—"You broke your promises. That was bad on your part, of course, because you were not going to raise taxes, you remember? You had to break that promise. You looked bad. You really did." So you had to, in the pretext of a premium, have a tax. You had to raise \$2.4 billion through the health premium. You needed some extra money and you knew that.

We disagreed because you taxed the middle class and the working poor a lot more than those of us who earn a little more than them. That's our disagreement with that particular tax, but that's another story. The point—to highlight my difference with the Tories—is that a high-taxing country can do well and offer good benefits to its citizens, and it's not the answer to the problems of the loss of 200,000 manufacturing jobs in Ontario since 2004.

New Democrats have proposed a jobs commissioner to deal with it. It worked in British Columbia for a long, long while. It saved 120,000 jobs. We are now proposing a number of other suggestions that Manitoba is implementing and you refuse. I'm not quite sure why you are so obdurate. You refuse to accept as a possibility, as an alternative, a manufacturing investment tax credit.

Manitoba has similar kinds of conditions as we do, yet they are saving many of their manufacturing jobs. How are they doing it? They've got a manufacturing investment tax credit. It's working. It's focused on saving

good-paying jobs whose spinoffs are not just good for that individual and his family or her family but good for the entire city and the entire province. We want to maintain, keep, good-paying jobs, rather than saying, "We have to adjust to a new economy. These jobs are disappearing to China and India, and what can you do? We simply have to adjust to the new economy."

I don't believe that's true. We can keep jobs here in Ontario, and we should, because they're well-paying jobs. A manufacturing investment tax credit that works in Manitoba can work here in Ontario.

What else do we propose? An aggressive Buy Ontario program for our transit vehicles at 50% of contract value. We believe we should be buying Ontario, and that—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Sorry? What have you got?

Hon. Jim Watson: Eighty-two per cent.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The Liberals, under duress and under push, eventually had to say, "We have a 25% rule, and by the way, Toronto is doing it."

Where were you when Toronto was fighting for that 25%? Not one peep from any Toronto member or GTA member or any other member, saying, "Yes, we support Toronto as it does this." Where was Ontario to say, "We support Toronto, and, in fact, we're going to lobby for Toronto to have 25%"? Not one of you from Toronto or beyond was there, saying, "We support them." Then, under push from New Democrats, where we say that we should have an aggressive Buy Ontario program for all transit vehicles of 50% of contract value, they would blah-blah-blah about this and blah about that. Eventually, out of the blue, they said, "Here's our law: 25% of the contract value. That should do it."

We think it should be higher. I think most Ontarians would like to keep the jobs here. We're speaking for those Ontarians who would like to keep the jobs here. If Americans can have such a policy, if Mexicans can have it, if most European countries can have it, surely Ontario can have it. And why couldn't you have it? What is wrong with you Liberals on the other side that you are either intimidated, unable, or incapable to go to that rule? What is it about you Liberals? What is it? I can't hear you.

So we have proposed that, and Liberals pooh-poohed the idea. My friend from northern Ontario was supportive of this. Obviously, not enough friends of his supported that, but I think he was on to something and I think he was right. I'm not quite sure why most of you wouldn't have listened to his suggestion. We don't need to name him; he knows who he is. He's right here in this House. But it was a good suggestion, and we've been pushing for that. I'm hoping that enough Liberals eventually will come to their senses and adopt that as a proposal.

We propose as a third suggestion the immediate investment of \$350 million in federal labour adjustment funds in vulnerable communities, directed to vulnerable communities. We should be doing this.

We have pushed for the last four years, with Howard Hampton as our leader, to make sure that we reduce

hydro rates for the pulp and paper mills in northern Ontario, reduce them to the point that those communities can have and maintain those jobs in those industries. We're losing jobs daily in northern Ontario, and much of what they say is, "Look, we don't want loans. We want reduced rates, because that is a big part of our problem." Sure, the Canadian dollar is high, and that's hurting too, but the hydro rates are a big part of that problem, and they've said that year after year. The member from northern Ontario knows this. We've been pushing for that too, for four years, and not many Liberals listened to us in this regard.

And so I have to tell you, I worry about the loss of the manufacturing jobs, and I know Liberals are worried too. What I don't understand is why they are not implementing some of these suggestions that can be theirs. Even though New Democrats are proposing them, once you adopt them, they become yours, they become Liberal ideas, because nobody is going to know who said what. If you adopt them, you can claim as your own anything you want. You do anyway, so why don't you just claim some of these ideas and say, "Yeah, we thought about it. It's a good idea"? Then people will say, "Those Liberals are really smart. They're really smart." They are not going to say, "Oh, they listened to the NDP." No. They're going to say, "Liberals are really smart."

Mr. John Yakabuski: Don't push it, Rosie.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Well, that's what I think they're going to say.

So be clever, because, Liberals, in your own opportunistic way, that's what you are. Just take advantage of the good ideas, because that's what you do all the time. That's why I don't understand: Why don't you just steal the good ideas, as you normally do? Just steal them.

Marilyn Churley is here in the assembly, a former member. Welcome, Marilyn.

And so I've got to tell you a few quick things, because the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke talked about Bill 35. I want to link it in to this debate, because the Toronto Star editorial talked about this. What I know is that Liberals quiver when Toronto Star editorials recommend, suggest, to Liberals that they ought to do something. Recall the \$10-minimum-wage battle. The Toronto Star had a campaign for a whole year almost, and they were pushing, never—I mean, look, we don't get much credit from them in terms of our campaign, the \$10 minimum wage. That's fine. We understand. But the Toronto Star had its own campaign pushing for the \$10 minimum wage, and Liberals were so embarrassed that eventually they had to say, "Now we've got to do something." It's not when Liberals push them; it's when the Toronto Star pushes them. The Toronto Star says, "This is good. You have to do it." Eventually, they do it, and then they say, "We're going to roll it out over three years. Now we've done it." The Toronto Star says, "Okay, they listened to us." They've gone away, and the Liberals, happy as could be, say, "We've done it. It's solved." Then they can claim to be revolutionary. Good God, they've raised the rates from here to unseen heights. Nobody else could

have done it. Thank God they're here—they've done the job.

1930

The Toronto Star backed off from a \$10-an-hour campaign. Today, the Liberals couldn't be happier. But what did I read a couple of days ago? It's titled "Duncan's Bill is Flawed." I repeat it for your benefit, not really mine, just to remind you because I know how much you squirm and quiver when the Toronto Star tells you what you don't want to know. They said, "Two weeks before the March 25 budget, Duncan announced that if the surplus exceeds \$800 million when the province closes the books at the end of each fiscal year, the first \$600 million would go to debt repayment and the rest would be divided up among municipalities for infrastructure projects."

Recall that you nice Liberals brought all the various mayors together at a love-in, hug-in, as it were, and they all praised you: "You guys are so great." They actually believed that if there was a surplus, it would actually go to them because that's what you said—that's what you were saying, member from Pembroke—and that's what they believed.

So the Toronto Star, God bless them, read the bill and said, "The Investing in Ontario Act, the bill to implement the municipal infrastructure top-up, is coming up for debate ... at Queen's Park. But a close examination of its contents shows no mention of municipalities or infrastructure." No mention of those two words. Nada. Nihil. Niente. Zero.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'd ask the member for Trinity–Spadina to address his comments through the Chair, first of all, and you have to speak in one of the official languages as well.

Interjection: One of my constituents, they couldn't understand that last part.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So we should limit ourselves to two languages; otherwise, it's problematic to the Speaker and others. I hear you.

To go on—because I've got a couple of minutes—it says, "Nor does it set out the threshold or formula for distributing the surplus money." Jimmy, that's what the Toronto Star says, not me. For your purpose, I say this. Then it says, "Instead, the bill provides that payments may be made to an 'eligible recipient'—defined only as an entity 'that does not carry on activities for the purpose of gain or profit.'" Do you hear what I'm saying, through you, Speaker?

The Star continues, "A spokesperson for Duncan said the particulars will be set out in the regulations." This is what it says in the paper. The editorial says that shouldn't be the way it is, because, they argue, "After revelations last year about the McGuinty government's lax controls on year-end grants to cultural groups, Duncan ought not to leave any room for doubt by stipulating in his bill what will go to municipal infrastructure."

I say this because I am convinced that all of you fine Liberals read that editorial and that you are all nervous. I wanted, for the benefit of the citizens watching, eating

carrots and spinach and so on, and a glass of wine, that that is what is happening with Bill 35.

The municipalities—mon ami M. Miller and all the other mayors that came to give you a big hug, I wonder what they think about your Bill 35. I have concerns, the Toronto Star has concerns and a whole lot of people who read the bill have concerns. Yet you Liberals are unmoved by this political kind of a revelation and you simply will go on to do your merry thing as you've always done. Cities are in trouble. Jimmy, cities are in trouble. You know that; you're a former mayor. All you folks can do is simply say, "We're putting billions of dollars here and there." Your billions never amount to billions. It's always a 10th of what you declare that people are getting—always a 10th, never more. Municipalities are getting 20%, 30%, 40% less than they used to 12 years ago. They have to go to the municipal property taxpayer to make it up because you folks, you the government, are unwilling to help them as they should be helped.

What do municipalities do? They go and whack whomever they can with whatever new taxes—with the power you've given them, including higher and higher municipal property taxes. It's not good. We have shifted away from a progressive income tax system to a new phenomenon called user fees. We're shifting the load from a fair tax system to taxing everyone who moves, whether he can afford it or not, at levels that cannot be afforded by most, and you say that's okay. User fees are not okay. The provincial income tax system was the fairer system, and you people, Tories in particular, and Liberals, are killing it. You're destroying it. You're forcing user fees all over Ontario. That's hurting people on low income and you should be worried about that.

I wanted to say that I'm happy to have had the 20 minutes. I'm looking forward to the Liberals' comments on this.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. First of all, I'm pleased to recognize in the chamber a distinguished former member of this Legislature, a former presiding officer of this House, a former Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, as well as the member for Riverdale, the member for Broadview–Greenwood and the member for Toronto–Danforth, Ms. Marilyn Churley. Welcome.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Leal: You can always count upon the member for Trinity–Spadina to give a very colourful speech, and he did that again this evening.

I remember those days when I was a lowly city councillor in Peterborough between 1990 and 1995. The member from Trinity–Spadina was the cultural czar for Ontario in those days. I remember he rolled into town, he had that great big Buick Park Avenue, the big 400-cubic-inch V8, the kind that were just great for conservation in those days. He was going from ballet to ballet, from opera house to opera house, but he did take the time to visit us lowly municipal officials in the riding of Peterborough. I remember, he also had the Ontario flags on the front fenders because he wanted everybody to

know that he was the Minister of Culture paying his respects to the lowly people in the great community of Peterborough. He had a big entourage with him too, but that's for another day.

I heard very clearly the member for Trinity–Spadina, and I want to get on the record what he voted against: raising the minimum wage, the auto investment strategy, the advanced manufacturing fund, the forest sector prosperity fund, assistance to Ontario farmers, and he voted against one of the great tools of our recent budget, the 10-year exemption for those new companies coming to Ontario that pick up on innovative research done right across Canada. He voted against it. A guy who from 1990 to 1995 was supposed to foster innovation and development here in Ontario turned right against it. I don't know what happened in the back seat of that Park Avenue during those five years, but he certainly missed the boat by not voting for this budget that's going to advance Ontario's needs.

Mr. John O'Toole: I, too, would like to recognize the member for Trinity–Spadina as being an always-entertaining speaker, but not always on topic. The debate tonight was actually on the budget bill and, as usual, I would say everyone is here—in fact, the attendance is up because of your eloquence and entertainment. Good content has always been expressed as his concern.

It's nice to have the member for Toronto–Danforth and Riverdale here tonight as well. Good luck in your future challenges, whatever they may be.

When we're talking about the budget, we always like to look at what the people think. Not unlike the previous speaker from the Liberal Party, we think that it underscores the lack of a plan here. With Dalton yesterday, or the day before, in Hamilton, I think the comment was, “the sermon from Mount Hamilton.” I thought that was the best comment about telling people, “Don't worry, be happy.”

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This is the leader of the province of Ontario. With all due respect, the Premier of the province showing up in Hamilton—with all the 200,000-plus jobs being jettisoned in the economy; families that have to pay the bills: the electricity bill, which is up, the gas, which is up, and dealing with feeding their families and paying the inordinate municipal taxes—for a Premier to show up in a community and tell people basically “steel it out” or “Don't worry, be happy,” I'm telling you, it makes my stomach feel a little bit queasy.

Without being disrespectful, we ask for more from our leadership today at all levels. I don't try to presume anything. He must have some strategy which I haven't heard about, a secret plan, a secret recipe. I'm not sure what it is. But to wait it out and to be sending a minister to China to find more jobs for Wal-Mart, I don't get the strategy, and this bill speaks to that very much.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I have to say that it's kind of disconcerting when you have a substantive debate going on and the government members' criticism is brought down to the level of personal attacks and nasty comments

about back seats of cars. I think this Legislature actually deserves a little bit more decorum than that kind of perspective that was brought by one of the former speakers. It's very disconcerting, because what I think the member from Trinity–Spadina did was lay out a vision and a reality that in fact there are other choices that could be made by this government. There are choices that speak to the real needs of real people. There are choices that speak to the quality of life of the people of Ontario. There are choices that other governments and other jurisdictions are implementing in this day and age, in this global economy, today's issues around oil prices and around every other challenge that faces not only our economy but economies across the world. I'm saddened by the fact that the government members can find nothing better to do than make personal attacks against somebody who's bringing specific solutions to the table.

I've got to tell you, coming from a municipality that still sees business education taxes totally out of whack with its neighbouring municipalities—notwithstanding the fact that the Premier was there telling all of us in Hamilton to “steel” ourselves, as the member for Durham just mentioned—we see that our very wealthy neighbours, relatively speaking, in terms of their average income and the taxes they can generate, have their downloading problems solved by this government. Peel, York and Halton don't have to pay social services downloading costs any more, but Hamilton does. That is absolutely unacceptable.

One-time funding here and there, the city of Hamilton coming cap in hand to beg this government every time, every budget year, is just unacceptable. Fix the downloading problem, for now and forever, for all municipalities, not just your chosen few.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: It's always a pleasure to listen to the member for Trinity–Spadina speak, even though I don't agree with him—

Mr. Randy Hillier: Always.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Always—because I think he's trying to present his party's views.

Interjections.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I wish those people from the back row would pay attention so they can know exactly what I'm trying to say.

Most of the time when we talk about the budget, it's important to outline the facts in the budget. I know the member for Trinity–Spadina wants to follow Manitoba or follow different provinces. He has to know that every province has its unique perspective, its unique situations, and depending on those situations, we build the budget.

This was a great budget because it supports municipalities across the province. I want to tell you something very important: In this budget we gave twice the support to the municipality of London. The first time it was \$6 million, the second time it was \$11 million. It was to support our innovation park and our infrastructure. I think it's very important.

Also in this budget is a lot of money for colleges and universities, because we strongly need innovation and

research and a future with jobs. There is a lot of money to support hospitals and nurses, and to support teachers and schools. This budget was spread out to support many different aspects of our society and our economy.

It's unfair for the member from Trinity–Spadina and all the members from the opposition parties to stand up and say that this budget wasn't a good budget. As a matter of fact, if you look at many different leaders in the province of Ontario, from the unions, to teachers, to hospitals, to educators, all of them praise this budget and say it's a great budget because it speaks to the situation in the province of Ontario.

Also, at the same time, we have a lot of money to plan for the future, to train people who have lost their jobs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time available for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I appreciate the comments from friends and foes, as usual.

The member for Peterborough's response was energetic, which is interesting. I'm glad I had the effect that I seemed to have had on him. He remembers me better than I remember him, which is interesting. I'm looking forward to hopping on that train to get to his municipality and seeing more of him in the next little while.

I have to tell you that next year's budget is going to be devastating. If you look at the budget, good citizens, those of you who are watching, this year's budget is projected to be \$200 million more—not billions; \$200 million more. It's a little-known fact that Liberals won't chat much about. It's page 91, actually, if I recall correctly. It shows that most ministries will be flatlined. What does that mean? There will be zero increases. What does it really mean? On the whole, there will be cuts. There will be cuts in most ministries, but the Liberals, at least in terms of their responses, will say, "Well, you know, it's hard. The economy is in dire straits. What can we do?" kind of thing.

They gave away all of the year-end money that they had, which they had to give away by March 31—one-time money. Unlike what the member for London–Fanshawe said—it's about planning—it's not about planning, my friends. There is no money for planning for the future. It's one-time money and it's sayonara. There is no money for long-term planning—not much of it—and whatever it is, it's small, tiny, little amounts of money that people are going to be getting. Those of you who care about these things should keep an eye on what's going to happen this coming year.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: We're dealing with budget Bill 44, but what really interests me is the budget leaks that have been going on in the province. I'm interested technically—and I probably could learn a great deal from the party that is presently in power—in repetition. In politics, repetition is everything. As a matter of fact, I've been here 12 years now and I remember prior to 2003, Mr. Dalton McGuinty would stand up and chastise and

say, "It's a shame you've closed hospitals." I was sort of looking forward to when he got into power and that was all going to change.

In 2003, when he was in power, I expected to see him reopening these hospitals that he complained about, that were closed. I remember waiting, and I waited all 2003. I'll give you the figure. Zero, that's the figure. That's how many hospitals he reopened.

Interjection: Zero.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Zero. That is how many Dalton McGuinty reopened in 2003.

Interjections.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: He can stand up if he has a complaint. He can stand up. Be gentle, be gentle.

In any event, I won't be here a long time. As a matter of fact, as Henry VIII said to his wives, "I won't keep you long," and I won't.

So in 2004, all year, I looked forward; he was finally going to rectify this terrible thing that happened under Mike Harris. And how many hospitals did Dalton McGuinty open up in 2004 that had been closed? How many? None.

Interjections.

1950

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: "He just got into power. You guys aren't being fair."

So in 2005, I thought, "Boy, we're finally going to see some action." All those complaints—and he complained in 2005. I remember him saying, in answering questions, "Well, you guys closed hospitals. Mike Harris closed hospitals." So I figured in 2005, it's a lucky year. This is the year he's going to reopen these hospitals that were closed. And how many did he open in 2005? None. I couldn't believe it. I was really embarrassed for him. We worked so hard, and nothing.

In 2006: He'd been in power for a few years now and I figured he's really got it, you know; he's got the bat, he's going to hit a home run, he is going to open up those hospitals that he complained about all those years, and they closed them. How many did he open up in 2006? Tell me.

Interjections: None. Zero.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Not one? I must be wrong. Minister Watson, surely you can tell me. He opened up how many in 2006?

Hon. Jim Watson: Queensway Carleton Hospital.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: None, eh? None.

Here we get up to 2007. They've been in power for quite a few years, and he's going to make good. I was losing faith but I still had some faith. This was the year, because he said in 2007, "It's a shame that Mike Harris closed these hospitals." So I knew he was going to do something in 2007. He was going to come back. Well, in 2007, how many did he open? There's only one piece of paper, so I don't have to shuffle papers, but he opened absolutely no hospitals.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Would the member please take his seat. You can't use props, and you know it.

Mr. Randy Hillier: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Would it be too much to ask all the members on the opposition benches to be awake while the debate is on?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I don't find that that's a point of order. I'll return to the member for Cambridge, who has the floor.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Now we're up to January 2006, and I sat here and listened to a question being asked of the Premier. In answer, he said, "It's a shame that Mike Harris closed hospitals." How many hospitals were opened in—

Interjection.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: This is about repetition. I'm trying to learn from you guys because you're good at it.

In any event, he didn't open any hospitals. So here we go—repetition. How does one leak information? It's great. We had a complaint under the rules about a budget, and it failed. There doesn't seem to be anything like budget privilege anymore. I thought the whole point of having leaks was, of course, to have repetition. But I am trying to learn, and you guys can teach me: How does one leak parts of a budget?

You could do it in a brown envelope. Sometimes they have brown envelopes to be delivered to all the newspapers and all the parties to let everybody know. I don't think it was done that way, because it was only leaked to one party. Do you know what came to mind? I'm going to have to explain this. There was a movie way back when, *All the President's Men*. I liked the movie. It was during Nixon's time. The reason I'm explaining it to you is because most people are a lot younger than I am and they probably don't remember what it was about. In that movie there was a character called Deep Throat. Deep Throat would sit there and let the news out to these newspapermen, and they always met in a garage. As a matter of fact, there was a complicated series of events. They moved a flowerpot on their windowsill and that way they knew that they should be meeting, and they would meet in this rather dark—

Mr. John O'Toole: It sounds like a Liberal plot.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: No, this is probably the way it happened. I'm just trying to figure it out. I want the mechanics of it. So they probably met in an underground garage and the Premier would be partially in the shadows and he would leak this information to only one reporter, or maybe there was a bunch; I can't really say because I wasn't there. But it was only one newspaper, and that was the *Toronto Star*. He would go to them and say, "Look, let me tell you, revenues in print media in Canada were down some 50% last month. I can give you a scoop. You're going to scoop every newspaper in Ontario. How's that?" I don't know what the conversation was, but it could have been, "In return you're going to give me repetition, you're going to give me hits." Or it could have been, "You put this on the front page rather than on the third page or the fifth page." Who knows? So, this conversation taking part in this underground garage by our Premier. "Deep Throat" is an interesting—I should go into that. How did they come up with "Deep Throat"? It

was an interesting thing. Supposedly, there was a rather sad movie around, a pornographic movie, in which there was a particular lady who was named Deep Throat and the movie was named after her. But it was also a matter of a play on words of the journalistic term "deep background." There was a play on words, so it wasn't quite as simple as it sounded.

In any event, I don't know what the deal was, but let's see if the Premier drew a decent bargain. Let's see how many hits we got before the budget was released.

The first hit was on March 20, and this was "Poverty Steps ..."—now, this is about six days before the budget. So, hey, we got our first hit on the 18th, actually, not by the *Toronto Star* but by one of its affiliates, the *Record*, being a newspaper in my area. So there was the first record I've got of the first hit. So the newspapers are paying off for their scoop.

What I don't understand is, what do the *Globe and Mail*, the *Toronto Sun* and the *National Post* say about all this? They don't say anything at all in the newspapers. They don't criticize. There's no comment at all, which I find really strange because the print media is a really difficult place to be now. They have difficulty in selling newspapers and they have difficulty in selling ads. The younger people are not reading newspapers, they're going to the Net instead. In any event, they got their first one on March 18. Now, "Poverty Steps are Just a Start"—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I would ask the member for Durham to keep his clippings down on his desk, please.

Mr. John O'Toole: No, I was just reading a—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): No, you don't have the floor. I return to the member for Cambridge.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Do I get my time lengthened because he was—in any event, March 20: "Poverty Steps are Just a Start." So there's the second hit that they bargained for. I just want to make sure you got your full money's worth for the scoop you gave to the *Toronto Star*.

March 20: "One Billion Coming..." Oh, my goodness gracious, what a big headline that is. I'm sure these were all on the first and second pages where they would be prominent. That was part of the deal, I guess. March 20, we've done that one.

Another on March 20: "Cities Likely to Get Good News..." You've got three hits on March 20 alone in the same newspaper. That's remarkable. I don't know how they squeezed it in.

Mr. John O'Toole: When was the budget?

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: About the 26th.

Infrastructure: March 22, another hit. This time the Premier didn't get into it. It seems like the finance minister was doing a little leaking of his own, meeting in the same underground garage with the same reporters. There he is with a smile on his face. The *Star* is giving us another hit. They're doing well.

March 24, another hit. March 25, another hit from the budget. I think it's remarkable. I think your Premier has done an excellent job of leaking.

I haven't had so much fun in years. But in any event, you got your money's worth. I'm learning from this party the concept of hits. I wish I had powerful friends like you do at the Toronto Star who could communicate these leaks in such a profitable manner for us.

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The only other thing I'd like to talk about very briefly is the lack of long-term-care beds being planned for. Dalton McGuinty is taking the Premier Peterson stand of freezing long-term-care beds. Peterson did it in 1988, and we're doing it again. The sad part is that individuals, rather than being able to move into a long-term-care home, end up in a hospital. We've read that 75 hospitals in Ontario have deficits and one of the reasons for the deficits—and I don't like to use the term, but it is used in certain circles—is bed blockers. More and more because of the waiting list to get into long-term care homes, they—

Interjection.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: No, they don't. They stay in a hospital and take up acute-care beds. Each hospital gets, as I understand it, one half the cost of an acute-care bed for each long-term-care resident. However, there's a maximum of six in many hospitals, so they don't get enough. The repercussions of that are twofold. Number one, these people, rather than living in a home, are living in a hospital. That is a shame and this government is directly responsible for this shame. Secondly, by putting them in a hospital bed, it means that bed is no longer available for acute care. Unfortunately, we get into the story of people sitting in emergency wards for 10 and 15 hours waiting for a bed, and they can't get one.

I warn this government that you are really on a slippery slope when you try to save a few bucks by not providing for our mothers, our fathers and our seniors. It will backfire. The bite is substantial. You will find that hospitals go deeper and deeper in debt and the Ontario taxpayer, unfortunately, is going to end up holding that debt.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to make a few remarks on the previous speaker. I have to say that I spent much of the time of his speech in significant consternation, particularly in regard to some of the illustrations he used in his dialogue. I've got to tell you, in the year 2008 it's kind of difficult to sit in this House and listen to the kind of remarks being made by an honourable member that came up in his speech. Notwithstanding that, it's certainly his choice as a member to use those kinds of references and those kinds of inferences. But I have to say, as a woman in this place, I found it rather distasteful, to say the least, and very disconcerting that here we are in 2008 and that's the level of debate we choose to engage in here. Nonetheless, it's certainly the speaker's prerogative

to think those kinds of things are funny and to make those kinds of disparaging inferences. I would have to say I disagree with them and find them extremely unfortunate.

Nonetheless, I think he did raise a few remarks that were in regard to the actual budget bill that he found to be problematic, and some of them I actually agreed with, when he got to the actual remarks—things like lack of investment in long-term care. Certainly in my community that's also an issue and a problem and something that I would agree with him on wholeheartedly. I wish I could agree with him in a good spirit. Unfortunately, I'm doing so with a bit of a disturbed spirit. But nonetheless, I think it's important to acknowledge that he did bring to the debate some important issues that need to be highlighted, especially the issue around the leaking of the information in documents again; not the way he couched all that, but the reality is that we need to debate these issues from a perspective of equality. I'd like to see that happen much more often in this Legislature.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I certainly want to add my thoughts on the comments by the member for Cambridge. Certainly he's very fond of the zero, nil, nada—and I apologize for not using all the official languages. Nevertheless, I want to remind him that in 2007 alone we opened up the William Osler Health Centre in Brampton, which accommodated 659 beds. I also want to mention to him that we had a sod turning in North Bay in 2007.

Earlier today we heard about a chill. Certainly, Woodstock, a neighbouring riding to mine, is getting a new hospital, something it has anticipated and asked for for many years.

When we talk about a chill, however, I was a member of the Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital board when the restructuring committee came through. Just before us was the community of Petrolia, which was in my riding in the last term and is now in the riding of the Sarnia-Lambton member, and the Charlotte Eleanor Englehart Hospital in Petrolia was under threat. I remember very clearly that the community rallied around their hospital and marched down the streets to the hospital to keep it open. It was under threat by the Tory government. They were determined to close it.

Now, under our government, it actually has increased services. It has more beds than it had before. When I was a member, the request was that there be some security around our rural hospitals. Those communities—Wallaceburg, Newbury, Petrolia—now know that their hospitals are there to stay. No one is threatening to close them.

But when you would talk about a chill, everyone was sure we would lose our rural hospitals under the Tories.

Mr. Randy Hillier: It was interesting to hear the previous member talk about how the Liberals would respond when they saw marches happening.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: We didn't see marches. You guys saw marches.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Tomorrow there will be another march right here at Queen's Park. Three hundred people or more are going to be marching on Queen's Park, and

they'll be marching here about the Liberal policy—I guess I should take a step back here—about the made-in-China budget that the Liberals have put forward. Of course, the Liberal budget is all about the buy-China policy: Buy a ticket on a junket to China; sell our jobs to China.

Of course I'll have to make reference to the earlier remarks by the honourable member from Peterborough, who was sort of denigrating another member's use of a Cadillac—

Interjection: A Buick.

Mr. Randy Hillier: A Buick. Of course, under the Liberal government, there will be no Cadillacs or Buicks here. There will be no North American cars here. There will be nothing left of our manufacturing here, as all the jobs are leaving. The honourable member will be happy if everybody drives a Chery car from China. This is the Liberal legacy: Buy a ticket on a junket to China.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Would the House come to order, please? I'll allow the member a few extra seconds to complete his remarks.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Mr. Speaker, this budget that the Liberals have presented is a tax-and-spend and kill-our-economy budget, and ship our jobs to China.

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The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further questions and comments? The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Jim Watson: Let me just comment about what this budget does for health care in my home community of Ottawa. We lost two hospitals under the Conservative government. We lost the Grace Hospital and the Riverside Hospital. The member from Pembroke asked if we reopened the Grace. They bulldozed the building. We couldn't open it. But do you know what we did? We fought, along with our colleagues in the east end of Ottawa, and we saved the Montfort Hospital. We're doubling the size of that hospital in east-end Ottawa, thanks to people like Madeleine Meilleur and Phil McNeely.

We're expanding, in my riding, the cancer centre for the Queensway Carleton Hospital. We're almost doubling the size of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. I remember that the previous government tried to close the cardiac unit of the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario. Where were the Ottawa Conservatives when the community was fighting to save the CHEO cardiac unit? It's like the silence of the lambs. We never heard from them.

We're proud of our track record in eastern Ontario when it comes to putting money into our hospitals, and we're equally proud of the money we're putting into communities like Smiths Falls. The honourable member who represents Smiths Falls had no input or influence on the fact that their community is getting \$6.2 million. I was very pleased to call the mayor of Smiths Falls, Dennis Staples, and tell him it's the McGuinty government that's delivering for his community and certainly not his own member of provincial Parliament. In 2007,

this government delivered \$60 million to the city of Ottawa. This year, it's \$78 million, including \$20 million under Minister Caplan's program, the MIII program, for a new archives facility in Centrepoinette.

We've turned the corner on the doom, the gloom and the cuts of the Conservative Party. We're building and expanding health care in the city of Ottawa and throughout the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Cambridge, who has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I'd like to thank the members for Hamilton Centre, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington and the Minister of Municipal Affairs for their comments.

I find it a remarkable coincidence that the only hospital that the Liberal government wanted to reopen had been destroyed. It was probably condemned, but we'll let that one go. I also find it remarkable that all this money is flowing, and I recall that our hospital—we're one of the fastest-growing areas in Ontario. Our population is expanding, the pressures on all services are great and this government had the temerity to stand up and cancel the new wing for Cambridge Memorial Hospital. It took demonstrations in the streets against this government and against your Minister of Health to rectify it. The people rose up and said, "We will not accept this. We will not accept waiting in an emergency ward for hours and hours and hours with our little children. We'll no longer accept what this government wants to ram down our throat." This government, I must say, yielded, and we do have, at the present time, plans for building a new wing at Cambridge Memorial Hospital. I thank you for your attention.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? I recognize the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

Hon. David Caplan: I seek unanimous consent to have a recorded division on this motion and to defer the vote until Tuesday, April 15, at the time for deferred votes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Caplan has sought the unanimous consent of the House to have a recorded division on the motion and that such division be deferred until Tuesday, April 15. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Caplan has moved second reading of Bill 44, An Act respecting Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters. By prior agreement, the vote on this motion will take place at the time of deferred votes on Tuesday, April 15, 2008.

Second reading vote deferred.

Hon. David Caplan: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Mr. Caplan has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

The House adjourned at 2015.

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