



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 39^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 9 March 2010

Mardi 9 mars 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
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Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
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Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 9 March 2010

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 9 mars 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Jewish prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Consideration of the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr. Rick Johnson: I move, seconded by Ms. Van Bommel, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

I will be sharing my time this morning with Ms. Van Bommel from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Yesterday, we were honoured to—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Mr. Johnson has moved, seconded by Ms. Van Bommel, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

“To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

“We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.”

You may continue.

Mr. Rick Johnson: Yesterday, we had the honour of hearing our government's plan on moving forward. It was called Open Ontario, and I believe the most important thing that our speech brought forward was a message of hope for Ontario.

I would like to quote our Premier from a recent speech. He said, “Some see a new world that threatens us. I see a bright future that beckons us.”

We know we are coming out of the greatest recession since the 1930s. It has impacted every country, every province, every community in Ontario. It has affected my

friends, neighbours and family. We have all been impacted.

The manufacturing sector in Ontario has been forever changed. Anyone who believes that it will return is sadly mistaken and living in a dream world. Families in Ontario want and deserve low prices for goods, but it's hard to compete with countries that have a lower standard of living, pay lower wages and don't have our social safety net. But when times are rough, that's when the people in Ontario stand up to the challenge. We pick ourselves up, we dust ourselves off and we get back to work.

The McGuinty government hasn't hidden from this challenge; we have faced it head-on. Our government has responded to the extraordinary challenge of the global recession. Over the past year, we have reformed our provincial tax system to make our province more competitive. We didn't do it because it was easy; if it was easy, others would have already done it. We did it because it was the right thing to do. It means tax cuts for 93% of Ontario taxpayers. It means cutting taxes for businesses so they can reinvest those savings in jobs and more equipment to improve their competitiveness. It means less red tape and paperwork for our business communities.

Independent economists from all sides of the political spectrum say our tax reform plan will create 600,000 new jobs. We put forward a tax reform plan to set the stage to open Ontario for business opportunity.

It was a confusing year for our business community. The opposition Conservatives used to be in favour of tax cuts for families and businesses. The current and past two leaders of the PCs all said our tax reform was the right thing to do, but when we did it, they voted against it.

Last weekend, the Leader of the Opposition said our past throne speeches were works of fiction. Let me talk about a few of the things we've accomplished from previous throne speeches.

In education, we've promised to phase in full-day learning; 35,000 four- and five-year-olds will benefit from that plan this fall. We've improved graduation rates; 70% graduated last year, up from 68% in 2003. We're meeting the standard in reading and writing; test scores are up 13% since 2003 and did not drop last year. We've added \$5 billion to the education budget since 2003. Healthier school menus—our new food guidelines take effect this fall.

In agriculture, we've increased the rural economic development by 50%, and we've announced further increases in the 2008 budget. There is the risk manage-

ment program for grain and oilseed farmers. We encouraged people to purchase local Ontario foods—a \$50-million Pick Ontario Freshness strategy.

For children and youth, we have increased child care spaces. Capacity grew by over 10,000 spaces since 2007.

On poverty, we've raised the minimum wage to \$10.25 an hour. A low-income dental plan—over 41,000 children received treatment in 2009.

These are just a few of the promises that have been kept and programs that have been delivered on, so to say that this is a fantasy or fiction is absolutely incorrect. If people had been paying attention to what we've been doing, they would have realized this. But some choose to live in a dream world.

I'd just like to continue on this. Last weekend, the opposition leader promised his followers tax cuts. We did that last year. You have to pay attention. I will repeat: We cut taxes for 93% of Ontario taxpayers and reduced business taxes, we have reduced red tape for businesses, yet his party voted against every one of these positive reforms.

Open Ontario is about hope; it's about continuing to invest in our infrastructure, roads, bridges, transit, energy and schools—\$32.5 billion in infrastructure over last year and this year. This investment is creating and sustaining 300,000 jobs, keeping all those people working, buying food and clothing, paying taxes and giving them hope, but the opposition voted against this.

0910

In my riding, this investment in infrastructure has meant new hockey arenas under construction in Apsley, soon in Fenelon Falls; supportive housing projects in Lindsay for our neediest constituents; new bridges; a new school; new water and sewer and treatment facilities, new libraries in Haliburton and Minden and on and on—over \$100 million in joint infrastructure funding projects in my riding announced this past year, giving hope to my community.

The opposition didn't support our effort to create jobs. The opposition leader says that we shouldn't be investing that much right now. He is saying we shouldn't be providing our citizens with hope. I believe he's wrong, as does the business community that used to be his core support. Len Crispino of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce said on March 26, 2009, of our tax reform, "It's a very bold step ... it's smart for the time because it's going to take the shackles off business."

Another quote: "Conservatives are mad at me because I have acknowledged the comments made by organizations like the TD Bank, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Institute of Competitiveness for Ontario that there are some economic benefits to this planned HST, which there are." John Tory, November 30 on his radio show on CFRB—I have a past relationship with him.

The Green Energy Act is a visionary plan to move our economy to the forefront of the recovery. Combined with our tax reform, we have made Ontario the place for the world's green energy sector to invest—\$7 billion worth of foreign investment by Samsung that will create 16,000

good jobs for Ontario. But once again the opposition has spoken out against this investment. What message are they sending to our foreign investment partners? Will they tell Toyota, Samsung, General Motors and Chrysler to take a hike in their vision of Ontario? What message is the opposition sending to our construction workers and steelworkers, who will directly benefit from this foreign investment?

Our Second Career strategy has allowed 26,000 Ontarians to return to school for retraining, giving them hope and opportunity. This program has made a difference to thousands of workers who have lost their jobs. It has given them a hand up when they needed it, and it will continue to provide training and support to people across Ontario. I have seen personally the effects that this has had when meeting with workers who have returned to college. For mothers who have gone back to school to be retrained, who want to get back into the workforce, who've lost their jobs, this program is working. The average age of a college student in Ontario is 28 years old. That tells us that people aren't just attending school straight out of high school. They're going out, and now that they've realized the value of post-secondary education, they've returned.

Open Ontario: Our government has said clearly through our actions, not just words, that we are indeed open for business and opportunity. We take our responsibility to govern very seriously. We have a responsibility to help those Ontarians hurt by the recession, but we also recognize the need to look forward, to find solutions and to build new foundations for growth.

The throne speech spoke about how our ancestors built this province. My grandparents settled in the Fort Frances area of Ontario in the 1920s. My mother was born there. My grandfather worked at the paper mill in Fort Frances and then the railway. It was people like him who helped develop Ontario. People from all over the world have come to Ontario to be part of our dream. They all helped to create the Ontario that we live in today. They brought Ontario to the forefront of technology, art, industry and agriculture. They helped create an economy that supports a quality of life for our families that is the envy of the world. The world still wants to come to Ontario, and our government has created the right environment that will encourage their investment.

The next five years will be decisive for Ontario. That is why we are launching our five-year Open Ontario plan. Growing our economy, growing stronger requires that Ontario be open to change, open to opportunities, open to our new world, open to new ideas, new people and new investment. The Open Ontario plan begins with creating a climate where business can thrive, create jobs and build innovative products to sell to the world. Everybody in this room has a BlackBerry. It's one of the innovative creations that was built, created and designed in our province, and it has literally changed the world.

Companies like Samsung are just the beginning of a host of businesses that are looking to Ontario for their future investment. When companies look around the

world to invest, they consider many options and look at many things before making their decisions to locate. General Electric recently announced a \$100-million investment in Peterborough. They could have located in Brazil, China, India—a host of other places—but they came to Ontario for a number of reasons: our tax incentives, our Green Energy Act and our tax structure that we have now created in this province, that makes Ontario open for business and open for investment.

Combine that with our world-class education and health care systems, which are just two of our public services staffed by dedicated professionals who are helping to draw business to our province. Our education system is in a class of its own. Full-day learning, improved graduation rates, more graduates attending post-secondary schools—all of these contribute to creating an Ontario workforce that is second to none.

I'd like to talk about a program that we introduced back in my school board days. We introduced full-day learning in 2003 because we felt that children in our rural areas, and particularly in my school board of Trillium Lakelands, weren't arriving at grade 1 fully prepared. So we put together a program for full-day learning as a pilot project in 18 of our schools, which was controversial when we first put it in. There were people concerned about their children leaving, that they were maybe too young, but it was accepted phenomenally. This was, I think, the basis on which the government came forward. We did a lot of studies and reports on the value it brought to those children in our rural communities and the need to get them on a level footing, because eventually those children will be competing for the same college, post-secondary places or jobs, and it shouldn't matter whether your child lives in Kenora, Cornwall, Timmins or Toronto. All children deserve to be on the same footing and receive the same level of instruction and education.

Our throne speech yesterday spoke of planting our flag for our economic future. We spoke about making Toronto a global leader in the financial services industry. We noted that Canada's banks based in Ontario are widely recognized as the soundest in the world, and that Toronto is now North America's third largest financial centre, home to 350,000 financial sector jobs. Ontario-wide, the sector supports 625,000 jobs. Our government is working to support the industry and create a plan to make Toronto one of the world's elite financial centres. Our universities are graduating the future leaders of the sector, and by supporting them, we will keep our best and brightest minds at home.

We also spoke in the throne speech about water technology. We are blessed in Ontario with having an abundant supply of clean, fresh water, of which I will take a sip. We lead the world in the technology to keep our water clean and pure. As part of our plan to expand our expertise in the field, we will introduce the Water Opportunities Act, which will lay the foundation for new Ontario jobs and help us lead the way in the development and sale of new technologies and services for water conservation and treatment.

Many countries in the world do not have access to clean water, and as demand outstrips supply by 40% in the very near future, our expertise in this field will lead to economic opportunities for Ontario companies worldwide. We will be able to provide hope to people in Third World countries, hope that we in Ontario can change their world for the better by providing them with clean, safe water—something that we take for granted and waste so foolishly.

Recently, with the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile, one of the chief things that our country provided was water treatment plants to provide fresh, clean water for the people who had suffered so greatly during the earthquakes. I think that was a great example of the technology that we possess in this country, which we can share with countries around the world. Yes, we need to do work on that here in Ontario too. There are areas of this province that require fresher and cleaner water, and it's one of the things that this act will address. But we need to think about every drop of water we use and misuse. It is the one element in life that we simply can't live without. Our government is committed to strengthening protections for our water, including the Great Lakes.

0920

I was astonished to read that the Leader of the Opposition ridiculed our government's recent ban on lawn chemicals this past weekend. I live on the Oak Ridges moraine. The headwaters of the Pigeon River system are located on my property. If I were to use lawn chemicals on my property, they would end up in the stream and they would end up in my well. Elementary school science says that if you put chemicals in the ground, they're going to end up in the water. Our children drink that water. To ridicule such an important issue, shows a complete disconnect with the reality of life in both rural and urban Ontario. Quite frankly, I'm appalled by those comments.

Our Open Ontario plan is about jobs. It's about green jobs. It's about smart jobs. It's about financial sector jobs. It's about jobs all over Ontario. It's about jobs in northern Ontario, where this economic downturn has been felt more severely than in other areas of the province. I've driven through northern Ontario recently, and I've seen first-hand the impact that the recession has had on the forestry and the mining sectors. The north needs help, and our Open Ontario plan will help kick-start that help. Driving through northern Ontario and seeing boarded-up buildings and houses for sale is a stark reminder of the assistance that is required, and our government is fully committed to working with northerners to turn this around.

We are also committed to working with our aboriginal communities and mining partners to fully realize the new mining potential that exists in the north. We will work with all of them. The region known as the Ring of Fire located in northwestern Ontario is said to contain one of the largest deposits of chromite, a key ingredient in stainless steel. This is the most promising mining opportunity in Canada in more than a century.

Every one of the initiatives we have presented in our throne speech will inspire job growth. Job growth will

bring stability back to our economy, allowing more money to be invested in local business. As more Ontarians return to work, they will buy more Ontario-grown food. Our government will continue to support growth and expansion of our agri-food sector to create more opportunities to buy local food. We will also work to open new markets outside Ontario.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Excuse me just a moment, please. I just ask the members to come to order and allow the speaker to continue.

You may continue.

Mr. Rick Johnson: Thank you, Speaker.

Our government will continue to support growth and expansion of our agri-food sector to create more opportunities to buy local foods. We will also work to open markets outside Ontario. Our recently passed animal safety bill will send the message to the world that our Ontario foods are trusted.

There have been a number of food processing projects that we've established in the past few years that have really helped our systems. One in particular is the Naturally Norfolk food processing plant in Delhi, which has helped tobacco farmers convert to cash crops, and having a processing plant in place has allowed them to expand their operations. It was extremely well received and is just one of the many projects that have gone forward under our government.

Now, shopping for Ontario goods will keep money and jobs in Ontario. I would urge everyone to ask your local grocery stores to stock, highlight and promote Ontario-grown and -raised produce and products.

There have been a number of success stories through our agricultural programs over the past couple of years. Maryland Farms and Jim Callaghan in a dairy operation just outside of Lindsay have got their biodigester all set to run and should be online this summer. They've got an incredibly efficient operation going there, and they will generate enough power to power 400 homes when the operation is up and running this summer.

Kawartha Dairy, known for the amount of product that they put forward, is recently undergoing expansion plans, which is supported by the government, so that their ice cream can be made year-round instead of just in the summer. It will allow better access and more access for the dairy farmers in my area, so that they have a sustainable market they can sell to.

In the area of health care, we have made great strides forward. We have 900,000 more Ontarians who have access to a family doctor than in 2003; we have vastly improved hospital wait times; and we have faster care in emergency rooms. We are committed to a stronger public health care system. But today we face challenges that require a new plan. We all know that we need to have a discussion around the challenges of health care delivery, and our government believes that we need to lead that national dialogue about health care and that we need to engage Ontarians directly in this important conversation.

As our population ages, we know that within a few years about 20% of our population are going to be

seniors. Seniors, through no fault of their own, require additional health care services. We need to address these concerns about how we deliver health care in Ontario so that we can safely and properly address the concerns of our seniors and aging populations.

One of the key things that we can do to help contain health care costs is to do all we can to promote better health for our children. We know that the rising childhood obesity rates are huge. There have been many tests going on about heart conditions and diabetes in young children. We need to do all we can to improve the health of our young children. This could be the first generation in years that may not outlive their parents. That is a shocking statistic. Anything that we can do to improve the health of our young children is dollars well spent.

Just how many health care dollars could we save right now if we all lost a little weight? Diabetes issues, heart conditions, and knee and hip replacements could all be improved. Many of the things caused by a propensity in all of us to gain weight could be helped if we could help control some of these self-inflicted health problems. If we all just dropped a little weight, I'm sure we would help to save millions of dollars in our health care system.

More people working means that more people are off social assistance. More people will be paying, contributing to the economy; more people will have hope. This will allow our government to continue to provide the services that so many of our seniors and our vulnerable citizens rely on. Strong companies make for stable pensions and stable social services. They are the foundation of our economy.

As our economy continues to recover, our government will continue to provide and improve our health care and education systems. Nothing is more important to our economy than our education system. Our government continues to keep education as our highest priority. Education is what gives us our competitive edge. We know that the places with the strongest schools today will have the strongest economies tomorrow. We know we need to reach higher. We are already home to many of the brightest builders, dreamers and innovators of the future.

We have made great progress in education since 2003. We have reduced class sizes, raised test scores, increased the graduation rate and added 180,000 students to our colleges, universities and apprenticeships. We enjoy one of the highest rates of post-secondary education in the world, at 62%, but we need to reach higher. We will reach for 70% attendance in post-secondary education.

We will open Ontario colleges and universities to the world and we will work to increase international enrolment by 50% while maintaining spaces for Ontario students.

In Fleming College in Haliburton this past year—the Ontario Online Institute—we have done a lot of work so that students can take courses in rural areas. The Ontario Online Institute, which was talked about in yesterday's throne speech, will allow more of our rural students to attend schools online and will be a great thing for rural Ontario. I'm very pleased to see that come forward.

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Education will enable us to be smarter than those we compete with. Education will enable our economy to grow stronger. Education will enable our farmers to grow better crops and raise more productive animals. Education will allow our financial sector to reach its full potential. Education has made Ontario a world leader in water technology. Education will allow our province to continue to provide the best service and support for our seniors—and to all our seniors through our health care sector. Education will help break the cycle of poverty.

What will our young people discover through education that will change the world? We know that today there are young children in schools who are just open to ideas and open to creativity. Giving them the tools to succeed will allow them to change the world. Hopefully, a student who is currently going to school in Ontario will some day stand up and announce that they've found a cure for cancer. They'll some day stand up and announce that they've found a way to dispose of nuclear waste in a safe way. These are things that we need to inspire our young people to achieve and to shoot for, because people in Ontario can demonstrate leadership for ideas, for a plan.

We have an Open Ontario plan—a plan for jobs and economic growth; a plan for hope; a plan that will provide hope for Ontario, for Ontario to release its potential. In yesterday's throne speech, we said, "Where others see a world that threatens, Ontarians see opportunity that beckons."

The world has changed. Ontario has changed. I urge everyone in this Legislature and across this beautiful province to support our throne speech and support our plan to open Ontario to the world. We have opened Ontario—a clear plan for jobs, economic growth and hope.

In closing, I would just like to say that yesterday was my first opportunity since being elected to attend a throne speech. It was an honoured tradition and one that I really was thrilled to be able to participate in. With dignity and respect, we sat at attention to hear the speech from the throne delivered by the Lieutenant Governor. With pageantry and formality inherited from years past, a vision of hope and future prosperity was painted with each word. Yet I was disappointed to observe a level of disrespect from Her Majesty's loyal opposition. Members walked in late, they had side conversations, and some actually heckled the Lieutenant Governor. While I'm not surprised to witness a level of disrespect for the government by the opposition, what was revealed yesterday was a level of contempt for this chamber and the job we do collectively. I was deeply disappointed, and I hope that at some point in time the Speaker will do something about that.

I thank you for having the opportunity to speak to the throne speech this morning. Open Ontario is a great plan for Ontario. We have a plan, and we're moving forward.

I would like to ask my colleague Ms. Van Bommel to continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I, too, am extremely honoured to have the opportunity to second the speech from the throne brought forward by the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable David Onley, on this, the second day of the second session of the 39th Parliament.

Before getting into my comments about the throne speech, I would like to congratulate the new members from St. Paul's, Toronto Centre, Leeds–Grenville, and Ottawa West–Nepean on their recent victories in the by-elections. This is, for them, their first throne speech as legislators, and I'm sure it will be remembered as one of many firsts for them here at Queen's Park.

I would also like to welcome back the two members who have enjoyed a prolonged winter recess from the House: the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, who I saw here earlier this morning, and the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. It's good to see them back, and I'm looking forward to seeing them in action again as they represent their constituents.

Last but not least, I want to thank the member from the beautiful riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for his perceptive comments on the throne speech. I know this is also, as he has stated, his first throne speech as a new MPP, and I know he feels very honoured, and he should, for having moved the throne speech. The member has done an exceptional job for his constituents since his by-election, and I know he will continue to do that for all of his constituents. His experience as a public school trustee, as well as his experience in the business world, will serve his constituents well as he advocates for positive change in his constituency and for the province as a whole.

At this time, I would like to speak about some of the themes brought forward by the Lieutenant Governor in yesterday's speech from the throne. While all are important, there are certainly those that have a special significance for my constituents and all rural Ontarians; among them, a plan for our economy, a plan for education, a plan for health care and a plan for agriculture and rural economic development.

These plans make up an important part of our government's overall Open Ontario plan and will have a distinct impact on every region in this diverse province. We have seen the world around us change radically since our government began its work in 2003. That reality caused the McGuinty government to approach this recession with innovation and vision. The five-year Open Ontario plan will lay a new foundation for an evolution that will take us into the next decade by opening this province to new opportunities, new jobs and new growth, and that is positive news for my constituents.

It is truly impossible to ignore the presence of the recession. We all know someone—a friend or a family member—who has lost their source of income, or seen their savings dry up or their pensions impacted. Newspaper headlines and television news broadcasts constantly remind us of our current situation, but there is also no shortage of good-news stories that provide the silver lining in a storm and the assurance for tomorrow.

Like the rest of Ontario and the world, my riding has not been spared the effects of the current global economic recession. Although job losses in the manufacturing sector have been significant, my constituents, like our government, displayed and continue to display a resiliency and an unwillingness to accept defeat in the face of challenges not seen in this generation.

By the time I was elected in 2003, Wallaceburg in my constituency had already suffered extensive manufacturing plant closures and job losses. With the financial assistance of our government, the vision of Chatham-Kent's council and mayor, and the determination of Stuart McFadden and the Wallaceburg task force, this community is leading the way out of the recession in my riding.

In December, I was able to announce the expansion of Advanced Emissions Technologies Ltd. to Wallaceburg, with a grant from the rural economic development fund. The company produces patented, made-in-Ontario piping and pressure vessel testing tools. This investment will create opportunities for 50 to 75 new, highly skilled manufacturing jobs, with the potential for 50 to 150 more jobs in the long term, and that includes enhanced skills training opportunities within an expanding manufacturing sector for my constituents, as well as creating new, spin-off business for other tool manufacturing businesses.

One month later, I was pleased to announce that our government would be supporting the opening of another new manufacturing facility in Wallaceburg, which would create approximately 64 new jobs when that plant opens later this year. Precismeca Ltd. is an international company that is a recognized leader in providing conveyor systems for the mining industry, and they are investing nearly \$3 million to equip the plant, including an \$894,000 loan from our government's advanced manufacturing investment strategy fund, or AMIS, as we know it. The provincial funding will be used towards the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment and design software, giving the company a competitive advantage in a changing marketplace.

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The local workforce in the Wallaceburg area is the main reason why Precismeca chose to relocate in Ontario from Alberta. The availability of highly skilled labour will ensure the company is able to achieve its long-term business plans. While naysayers like the leader of the official opposition mistakenly call these partnerships "corporate welfare," this government sees investments similar to the ones given to Precismeca and Advanced Emissions Technologies as one of the ways that will see our government free itself of the tight grip of the global economic recession. We will become recognized globally as a leading jurisdiction that is open for business.

As a mother of five and a grandmother of 13, it should come as no surprise that I would want to talk about education in my seconding of the speech from the throne this morning. All of us know that good-quality education lays the groundwork for a successful future.

Our government has always and will continue to pride itself on being a champion of public education. We have

moved forward in leaps and bounds in the last six and a half years. Elementary students' reading, math and writing scores have increased by 13%. Graduation rates are also up as 77% graduated last year, up from 68% in 2003. And parents now have more resources and opportunities to get involved with their children's education.

I also want to thank my colleague Liz Sandals, the MPP for Guelph, for her work on our safe schools legislation, which has ensured Ontario's places to learn are a safer and more welcoming environment for our students.

Our government has worked extremely hard to rebuild positive relationships with the education sector and to foster an atmosphere and an environment where all teachers and educational support staff are appreciated. Gone are the days when parents were faced with a government that was determined to create a crisis in education—and the resulting endless rounds of teacher strikes. I remember them well—

Mr. Jeff Leal: I remember those days.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: —as does my colleague from Peterborough, and we all know the stress that that created, not only for the students, who were left to wonder how they were going to complete their education, but also for the parents who were trying to deal with how to take care of young children when the parents were both working.

Not a day goes by when we can't see the transformational and positive influence that education has on the lives of our children, the lives of their families and the surrounding communities that these families call home.

In 2004, my riding was selected to be a demonstration site for the rural Best Start program. This was the introduction to early learning for many of my constituents. Sites were created in rural schools that reflected the local culture. The French influence was apparent in Pain Court in the language and the décor. In Brooke-Alvinston, the new entrance to the school and Best Start area resembles a farm silo. And in Sarnia, the aboriginal Best Start reflects the traditions of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation of that area.

Our province's education system truly made a difference in the lives of these Best Start children, and now our government is moving forward on a pivotal transformation of our public education system: the implementation of full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. Though not all parents have access to full-day learning this September, parents of 35,000 four- and five-year-olds will benefit, and in my riding, nine schools will offer the program this year.

The program is not mandatory, but the number of parents in my home area of Middlesex who have approached me to say that they will be sending their four- and five-year-olds to the first available program tells me that we are not only doing the right thing for the next generation but that the parents and grandparents of these children understand the importance of this opportunity that is being offered to their children and grandchildren. This government, like the parents of Middlesex, Lambton and Chatham-Kent, understands what it takes for our children to be the leaders of tomorrow.

As I have made my way from one corner of my large riding to another, I have met with constituents and had an opportunity to hear more about their concerns, and I hear more about our health care system than almost any other provincial issue. In rural and northern areas of this province, access to timely and appropriate health care is not only important for the day-to-day lives of my constituents but also for the economic development of our communities.

Yesterday, the Lieutenant Governor spoke about this government's plan to continue improving our health care system by pursuing a path of constant reform. That includes things such as prescription drugs and making them affordable, legislation to make health care providers and executives accountable for improving care, and further legislation to create a hospital system that will utilize the expertise of our community partners and health care professionals. Along with these changes, this government will continue building on successes like our wait time reduction strategy, and add to the 900,000 Ontarians who now have a family doctor.

In the latter part of 2009, I had the opportunity to make an announcement that demonstrates this government's commitment to a strong public health care system and access for my constituents in rural Lambton county. We recognized that Petrolia was an area of the province with a high number of patients who had no family doctor. As a result, a new family health team will be established that will provide better access to care closer to home, with physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, social workers and dietitians.

Mr. Jeff Leal: The oil capital of Ontario.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: The oil capital of Ontario.

The team will also help reduce emergency department use by providing non-emergency care, and I know from talking with the professionals in my area that it is very welcome in Lambton county by both patients and health care professionals alike.

Our government's existing 150 teams have already enrolled more than 318,000 patients who did not have access to a family physician before, and are providing quality health care to more than two million people. This moves us closer to the quality health care my constituents expect and deserve.

All members of this House recognize how important the agricultural sector is to my riding and my constituency. I know I've talked about it many, many times here in the House over the last six and a half years.

Mr. Jeff Leal: You're a great supporter of supply management.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I am a great supporter of supply management. Yes, indeed.

While agriculture is recognized as the second-leading economic driver in this province, I would venture to say that in the riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, food production has returned to its ranking as the primary force in our local economy.

We all understand that one of the components to living a long and healthy life is the existence of a nutritious diet

filled with fruits, vegetables, carbohydrates and proteins. I'm sure that all of us have noticed more and more fresh Ontario produce showing up in the local grocery stores, at seasonal farmers' markets in urban areas, or at roadside stands for those of us lucky enough to live in rural areas.

Mr. Jeff Leal: We're shipping tomatoes to Florida now.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: We are shipping tomatoes to Florida.

Increasingly, Ontarians are taking an interest in our local food. We understand that when they buy local foods, they are helping to support Ontario's farmers, food processors, local economies and the environment. Ontario's food producers make a tremendous contribution to our economy and our rural communities. They grow, raise and produce high-quality food products that are among the best in the world.

0950

Our government continues to take action to increase consumer awareness of and demand for fresh, high-quality local food produced in this province. We are working with farmers and various local associations in my constituency and across the province, including farmers' markets, to increase our fresh food production and to bring Ontario's bountiful local food to all our dinner tables.

Mr. Jeff Leal: How many markets do you have in your riding?

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I can't tell, but I have lots of farm markets in my riding, and lots of roadside stands as well.

We have increased funding for the Foodland Ontario local foods promotion, which has expanded beyond fruit and vegetables to include meats, bakery and processed foods, reminding us all that good things grow in Ontario—and I will resist singing the logo.

In 2008, we launched a new multimillion-dollar, four-year Ontario market investment fund, a part of the Pick Ontario Freshness strategy, which includes support for local food networks and other industry efforts in promoting local food.

We are also leading by example. We recognize that serving Ontario foods in cafeterias and food service venues provides healthy menu choices for the public. Over 20 government cafeterias now prominently promote and feature Ontario foods, including our own Queen's Park dining room and cafeteria.

Tax reform is important to Ontario's farmers. We started by exempting the land transfer tax on farms that changed ownership between members of the same family, and in 2008, we extended that exemption further by including transfers of corporate farms to family members. The move to a single sales tax process is welcomed by Ontario's farmers who will no longer have to file separately for PST-exempt items that they purchased in retail stores that were not equipped to deal with the requests by farmers for an exemption. Most farmers let the PST exemptions slide rather than go through the

time-consuming paperwork required to claim what was rightfully theirs. Now, when they make their GST claim they will also be making their PST claim at the same time, and that returns important dollars to their cash flows.

Since 2003, 240 projects have been approved under the rural economic development program, with a total provincial commitment of approximately \$77.5 million, which has in turn generated approximately \$651.5 million in new economic activity. I want to say that these investments have made a real, positive difference for my communities in my riding.

I would be remiss in not pointing out an encouraging story for the food processing sector in Chatham-Kent. In June of last year, Thames Van Farms were successful in their application to the rural economic development plan. The province is providing more than \$1 million to retrofit the green shipping facility. This funding will not only create jobs and retain 100 full- and part-time plant positions and more than 2,000 seasonal jobs, but the investment will also help Thames Van Farms Ltd. become globally competitive as a cucumber grading facility, increasing the potential for new contracts for up to 150 new growers. By increasing the productivity within Thames Van Farms, they will have the opportunity to regain approximately 1,000 acres worth of high-value crop that was lost through increased foreign competition and volatile markets.

Also through the RED program, a grant of \$500,000 was given for beach enhancement at Grand Bend last year. As a result of the hard work by the local community, the beach will now claim its Blue Flag designation, an internationally recognized identification of the restoration of natural habitat, water quality and conservation that has occurred on the beachfront. Everything was in place for Grand Bend's first Aquafest, a celebration of the one thing most Ontarians take for granted: water. And tourism, which was always strong in this area, will draw even more international visitors to their pristine beaches. RED continues to be an important funding program, and participation in this partnership program continues to grow as it addresses the funding needs of some very innovative rural Ontarians.

Farmers throughout my riding are participating in green energy production. A number of sleek wind turbines already lined the fields between Forest and Grand Bend more than a year before the Green Energy Act was passed in this House. These six turbines in Lambton county are expected to produce roughly 30 million kilowatt hours of electricity annually, at full capacity, enough to power 3,000 homes. This project, among others in my riding and throughout the province, is only the beginning of the green energy potential for Ontario.

Laurie and Sandy Stanton and their sons were well ahead of the green energy curve when they decided to build their new dairy operation, Stanton Farms. Together with the Universities of Guelph, Waterloo and Western, they have collaborated to complete a biogas demonstration facility that will not only provide electricity for the

farm but also power the neighbouring community of Ilderton.

Our Green Energy Act has made our community and the province the leader in clean energy and is also a key component of our Open Ontario plan. Over the next few years, this province will build a cluster of clean technology companies that will build their goods here and sell them to the rest of the world. Municipalities like Chatham-Kent have been waiting for this very opportunity to compete for the green energy manufacturing jobs that these companies can potentially bring to their municipalities.

Yesterday, the Lieutenant Governor announced our intention to introduce the Water Opportunities Act. With this act, we will lay out a plan that will help us conserve more water at home and develop the technologies that are already in demand around the world.

Trojan Technologies, a company headquartered in London, Ontario, began in 1976 when Hank Vander Laan bought Trojan Metal Works. Mr. Vander Laan didn't purchase Trojan because of its specialty in manufacturing tool boxes; he bought the company because he noticed it had a patent on a small UV treatment unit for homeowners to purify their drinking water. Back in 1976, he recognized the benefits of ultraviolet light as a more environmentally friendly alternative to chemical water treatment. Fast-forward through two decades and you will see a company that has installed thousands of ultraviolet disinfection systems in over 25 countries, and now is a world leader in UV waste water disinfection.

Not content, Trojan Technologies decided to expand their application of ultraviolet light for large-scale drinking water disinfection, and by 2002, Trojan had won contracts to supply equipment to three of the largest ultraviolet drinking water plants in the world. With companies like Trojan, Ontario has quietly become a world leader in clean water technology.

Mr. Jeff Leal: The city of Peterborough bought some of their equipment.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: There you go.

The Open Ontario plan and the proposed Water Opportunities Act will help Ontario businesses like Trojan Technologies to leverage our clean water expertise. We can help growing countries like China and India with the technology needed to have their own safe, clean water supply.

Today is my granddaughter Kristina's birthday. She is now 17 years old, and when I reflect on how much things have already changed since her birth in 1993, I can't help but wonder what her world will look like in another 17 years. Do you remember when we were 17? I do. We had so many opportunities.

Hon. John Milloy: It was 10 years ago.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: For some of us it was 10 years ago, for some of us a bit longer. So many things lay ahead of us. The world was our oyster. Everything was laid out ahead of us and we couldn't wait to grow up and take advantage of everything the world had to offer.

Kristina basically has the same dreams that her parents and her grandparents had at that age, but she is living in a time of radical change and the things she aspires to today may not even exist any more by the time she reaches my age of 60.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Sixty? You don't look 60.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: I am 60.

Mr. Jeff Leal: You're kidding.

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: You can't have 13 grandchildren and not be 60.

Education is key to the new generation of jobs that await her. Ontario's ability to compete globally for the new generation of jobs is critical to her finding employment when she's ready. She will likely spend a great part of her life returning to education over and over again in order to remain competitive in the labour force and the workforce.

In order to achieve all this, we need to tackle the deficit in a responsible and well-thought-out way that will not rob her and her generation of the gains that we have made as a government and as a society. But at the same time, we cannot leave her generation with a debt that cripples their future.

I welcome healthy and constructive debate from all sides of the House over the next few days on our government's throne speech and our five-year Open Ontario plan, as well as the countless ways that we have rebuilt and continue to improve the services that are so crucial to all Ontarians. But I fear that, as much as the opposition leaders and their caucus members may debate the throne speech, their plan for Ontario remains the same, and that is to say that they have no plan. If there was one theme that was common in yesterday's speech from the throne, it was that our government has a plan for Ontario's future with the creation of jobs, not just for those who have lost their jobs in this recession, but for our future generations.

The McGuinty government is committed to building a province that mirrors the ideals of the people in Ontario, including our immigrants and our aboriginal people. There are a number of important issues that I would have loved to address in the past 30 minutes, but the time did not allow it. That certainly includes issues around the needs of the aboriginal people of my riding. I do want to make sure that my constituents understand that I am extremely mindful of those needs and that I will work for them through the Open Ontario plan and through this throne speech to ensure that they are served in a way that they deserve and in a way that they expect to be served.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller: Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day.

Hon. John Milloy: No further business, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 1030.

The House recessed from 1004 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jeff Leal: It's a great honour for me to introduce, in the members' east gallery today, Angela Pind, mother of page Jordan Pind from Peterborough, and Jordan's grandfather Jim Marsden. For many years I've had the pleasure of working with Jim, a former president of the Legion in Lakefield, Ontario, in the riding of Peterborough.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'd like the assembly to welcome Stanley and Edith Heleniak, who are here to visit page Rachael Heleniak, their daughter. The Heleniaks are in the members' gallery. I'd also like to welcome Andrew, her brother, who is enjoying the day away from school to be here today. Welcome to Queen's Park. I hope you enjoy your visit.

Mr. Michael Prue: It's my honour to introduce Emily Musing, who is the mother of Max Musing, the page from Beaches-East York. She will be joined later this afternoon by Max's father, Michael Musing, and Max's grandmother Ursula Musing. They're all going to be here to watch Max do his wondrous duty here at Queen's Park and, I'm sure, to enjoy the proceedings.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: It's my pleasure to welcome members of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario to the Legislature today, including David Sculthorpe, the CEO; Laura Syron, vice-president, research and advocacy; Mary Lewis, director of government relations; Marco Di Buono, director of research; Sharon Brodovsky, senior manager, Spark Together for Healthy Kids; Nadia Yee, senior manager, government relations; Cristin Napier, government relations. They will be here today to meet with MPPs and also for a reception from 5 to 7 in the legislative dining room.

I would also like to welcome my friend Sharon Dongen, from my colleague Wayne Arthurs's riding, to the Legislature today.

Mr. Paul Miller: In the members' west gallery, I'd like to introduce Dushawn Rodish. Dushawn is a graduate of the U of T political science program, and he's here to learn about politics.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: It's my pleasure to introduce a former page, Hannah Jansen, who's up there watching her brother Colin, who is a page right now. Welcome back.

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's my pleasure to welcome Hani Louis here today, father of page Julia Louis. She must be a very popular person because it seems that I'm standing on my feet every second day inviting one of her guests here. Thank you.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I have the pleasure to introduce to you a delegation from the People's Republic of China, specifically from Anhui province. They are being led by

Mr. Liu, who is actually representing the government of Anhui province. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I want to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Ajax–Pickering and page Matthew Kostuch, to welcome his mother, Christine Kostuch; his sisters Jessica Kostuch and Kristen Kostuch; and his friends Wendy Kelly and Olivia Kelly to the Legislature today.

Just for the members' information, the pages were prorogued as well; unlike some bills etc., they were carried over to the next session.

There being no further introductions, it is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Acting Premier: What was most interesting about your tired, same-old, same-old throne speech was what the throne speech did not contain.

We have seen a pattern develop of the McGuinty government saying one thing in its throne speeches and doing the opposite. In the 2003 throne speech, Dalton McGuinty did not mention that he wanted to make Ontario families pay the single largest income tax increase in the province's history, and then later on he brought in the so-called health tax that nailed hard-working Ontario families with a massive new tax hike.

Acting Premier, given that you have no plan to balance the books, what new McGuinty surprise tax increase can we expect to hear about in the time ahead?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite wants to keep looking back—and by the way, not looking back in what I would call an accurate fashion.

I would remind him that the speech from the throne spoke of our need for more clean energy, which we think is enormously important to economic growth. It spoke of a clean water strategy, and I'd remind the member opposite that this month marks the 10th anniversary of Walkerton, an anniversary that brings back a lot of memories of a time that that member would like to go back to.

We brought forward a tax reform package that lowers taxes for Ontario's poorest; we brought in a tax package that will create 600,000 jobs, according to the Tories' lead expert.

This Premier, Premier McGuinty, has a plan that will take this province forward, a plan to create jobs and a plan that will balance the budget. That's more—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I think Ontario families see through this, Acting Premier. With that empty, same-old, same-old throne speech, the only plan Dalton McGuinty has is

to hit Ontario families with another massive tax increase in the time ahead.

We saw, for example, again, in your 2005 throne speech, that while you did mention the City of Toronto Act, you did not mention that that would mean a tax increase on ordinary, hard-working families in the city of Toronto. It turns out that that meant the ability for David Miller to double-tax Toronto families when they sell their homes, when they register their cars, or to hike fees on garbage collection and start charging them for plastic grocery bags.

You didn't tell us about the health tax and you didn't tell us about the city of Toronto taxes. I'll ask you again: What new tax hike do you have up your sleeve, finance minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We laid out the largest tax cut in Ontario history a year ago, and that member and his party, having said that we should do it, then voted against it.

That leader has a new logo, but he has no plan. He has no plan to deal with the unemployment challenge that Ontario is faced with; this Premier and his government have that plan. That leader and his plan want to go back. Their idea of leading Ontario is to close schools, to close hospitals, to lay off water inspectors, to lay off nurses, to lay off teachers. They were wrong then, and they're wrong now.

This is about building a new and better future for Ontario. It's not about going back to a distant past where we're reminded yet again of Walkerton, of Ipperwash, of a failed regime, a failed ideology, a failed policy. Premier McGuinty will lead Ontario back—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Start the clock.

Final supplementary?

1040

Mr. Tim Hudak: Certainly a lot of hot air from the finance minister, but no answers for ordinary families that have been nailed over and over again by surprise tax increases. You made no mention of your health tax, but you hit families with it. You made no mention of the new taxes in the city of Toronto in a previous throne speech, but you nailed families in Toronto with a tax increase. In the 2007 throne speech, you made no mention of the HST sales tax grab that's going to hit families hard with 8% more on gas for their cars and heat for their homes. Families do not believe Dalton McGuinty any more and this throne speech is not worth the paper it's written on.

You have no plan to balance the books; you have the biggest deficit in the history of this great province. So I ask you minister, will you roll up your sleeves and reveal what you have? What's the next new McGuinty tax grab you're going to unleash on hard-working Ontario families?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Ontario families wanted reduced wait times and they got reduced wait times. Ontario families—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and the member from Lanark will come to order, please.

Continue.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Ontario families wanted more teachers in the classroom; this government delivered it. Ontario families rejected their ideology and their policy of scapegoating public servants, educators and others who contribute so much to our children's futures. They wanted that and they got it. They wanted a tax reform plan that would create jobs. This government and Premier laid that out.

Now they know that our world has changed as a result of the greatest recession in many, many years. Premier McGuinty has laid out a plan. It is about clean energy, clean water, tax reform. It's about a range of issues that will build that better future and create jobs. A plan—something that party never had and doesn't have today.

GOVERNMENT ASSETS

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Acting Premier. Insight Research Canada of New Brunswick is currently polling Ontario families on a 20% sale of LCBO, Hydro One, Ontario Power Generation and the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. Given that you've paid for polling, finance minister, why was there nothing said in your same old same old throne speech about a fire sale of crown assets?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think we've been very clear that we're looking at our assets. We're looking at them from a variety of angles, but we're looking to see—

Mr. John Yakabuski: You're looking at covering your assets.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew, withdraw the comment, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No. Please stand and withdraw.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdrawn.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We have been very clear about that. We've also been very clear that no decisions have been made. I spoke last week about the principles that would underline any kind of transaction involving all or part of our assets. We laid that out very clearly. We did say that we wouldn't do what they wanted to do, which was to take a whole asset and sell it. We wouldn't do what they did with the 407—give up an asset and give the owner the right to raise prices as much as they want. No, we're taking a thoughtful, clear approach to this. It's the right approach, and very different from what they attempted to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: This just proves that Dalton McGuinty's throne speeches are not worth the paper they're written on. You say one thing in the throne speech and do something else entirely.

We understand as well, finance minister, you've hired aggressive Wall Street banking firm Goldman Sachs to

tell you how to bundle up these crown corporations into one mega-corporation and proceed with a fire sale of crown assets.

I'll ask you again, Minister: If your plan was to lump these agencies into one mega-corporation and use the fire sale to fuel your runaway spending, why didn't you at least put your plans in the throne speech so Ontario families know what you're all about?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We indicated late last year that we were doing a thorough review of our assets to make sure that the assets are being maximized. We've said that there has been no determination. We are looking at a variety of factors as we move forward.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: It's very appropriate.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I do think it's appropriate; I do think it's appropriate to get outside advice, as we have done, including the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and others.

I can tell the member opposite that we have to look forward to these kinds of challenges. We have to make sure that we examine every aspect of the balance sheet, as well as the income statement. I think we have an obligation to assure ourselves that Ontario's assets are being well-managed and properly managed. That doesn't involve a fire sale like the 407, and it doesn't involve selling off a complete asset, like they wanted to do with Hydro One; it involves making sure that our assets are being properly managed and that Ontarians are getting—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Each and every hour, Dalton McGuinty is spending \$2.8 million more than he takes in in revenue. He has upped the deficit to the biggest in the history of this province, and his throne speech only had 24 words mentioning any plan to balance the books. With a \$25-billion deficit, it's more than \$1 billion per word.

Taxpayers want to know, what is your plan? You're either going to increase taxes or have a fire sale of crown assets—and we saw what this means with eHealth: Liberal friends and insiders got rich at the trough and Ontario families got nothing in return. We fear that eHealth is just going to be the appetizer to your Liberal friends for a feeding frenzy with crown assets.

Minister, how much are Liberal insiders—how much will Goldman Sachs—make off this deal to sell off 20% of crown assets?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I want to re-emphasize that the government is merely looking at its assets. No decisions have been taken. At the appropriate time, if a decision is made, we will have a full and broad public consultation on all these matters.

I would remind the member opposite—the member is right to be concerned. We have an example of an asset sale that went very wrong when he and his party sold the 407 and gave away the pricing power, and they can raise prices in an unlimited fashion. We even attempted to fix that in court. They have done such a good job of protecting the person who bought it versus Ontario motorists

that there was no way to undo that deal that you and Mike Harris made.

There's no question that Ontarians understand that, like every jurisdiction, we've gone through a terrible recession—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Ontario families are worried about jobs, about retirement, about whether they're going to be able to afford to put their kids through school. You would have thought that this government would have addressed some of these worries, yet yesterday we were witness to a throne speech that showed this government either doesn't care or just doesn't understand.

Given all that we know, how could this government have put forward a plan that ignores everyday anxieties Ontarians are dealing with?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite must have been in a different room; the throne speech was all about jobs. First of all, we spoke about our \$32.5-billion commitment to infrastructure, which that member and her party voted against. It was all about clean energy—clean energy that will create some 50,000 jobs in the coming years. It's all about a tax cut package that will create more than 600,000 jobs in the next 10 years.

That member must have gotten it all wrong, because, in fact, Ontario families—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Minister?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We've heard nothing from the third party but empty, tired rhetoric, with no plan for the future, no plan that addresses the job situation in Ontario.

When we went in to assist the auto companies, that member and her party didn't support it. When we wanted to build new public transit in Toronto, to buy cars from Thunder Bay, that member and her party were opposed to it. That member and her party want to raise the provincial sales—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister?

1050

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Cambridge will please come to order.

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In homes across Ontario, alarm bells are going off, and instead of seizing the moment, the McGuinty government reached out and hit the snooze button. Ontarians were looking for realistic and practical solutions and they were left scratching their heads. As this government offers grandiose plans to export clean water technology, hundreds of Ontario communities deal with boil-water advisories. As they vaguely promise to recruit more foreign students, Ontario stu-

dents cope with per capita post-secondary funding that is dead last in all of Canada.

Why is this government so out of touch with the real and pressing needs of Ontarians?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think Ontarians recognize the need to fix up our water system precisely because of that. I think Ontarians recognize the importance of multiculturalism and drawing many new students into Ontario. I hope you and your party will support that and won't try to block it. I think Ontarians recognize that clean energy is important. The Green Energy Act started that process. That party may not support it; I think Ontarians do.

I think Ontarians are looking for real answers, not the kinds of answers that party gives, living in the past, not addressing the future, not responding to the very real challenges in the new global economy. That's the plan we've laid out—no plan over there, no ideas, no future. This government has a plan, and the right plan, for the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: People want good jobs. They want a secure retirement. They want health care services that are there for them when they actually need them. Rather than addressing these issues, the McGuinty government offered recycled commitments, vague schemes and empty promises; a plan for financial services that they announced in the last budget; a plan to develop jobs in the north a decade from now.

Does the McGuinty government have a real plan to help people with the challenges they're facing today, and if so, when might Ontarians actually be able to see it?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think the Ring of Fire is about right now. I'm astounded that the NDP would speak against doing something on the Ring of Fire. I was in Thunder Bay and Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie and that's what I heard about from Ontarians all over the place.

So you guys talk a good game over there. You say you're about fixing the north. But as soon as we come out with a plan, what do they do? They're against it.

I'm reminded yet again, this party doubled tuition for Ontario students way back when. People haven't forgotten that.

This government has a plan for the future. It is helping to build northern Ontario, to help that area get through this difficult time. They know who is on their side. It's Premier McGuinty and the Liberal members from that area. We're in favour of working on the Ring of Fire. I'm disappointed that you would be opposed to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What I know for sure is that somebody should dump some cold water on that little ring of fire across the way.

GOVERNMENT ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Acting Premier. It wasn't so long ago that current

members of the McGuinty government spoke out against the selling off of public assets in this province. In 2002, the Premier himself spoke about Hydro One from this side of the House. Here is what he said:

“You find yourselves now in desperate financial circumstances. You want to sell off Hydro One so you can balance the budget. In the end, it’s going to be consumers who will continue to pay the price for your mismanagement and bungling.”

My question is this: Why is this government now so keen about selling off public assets?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We are looking at the management of our assets to ensure that Ontarians are getting the maximum value for them. I think that’s fully appropriate. I think it is the right way to do it. I think it takes time to do the kinds of due diligence you need to do if you are going to assure yourself and, more importantly, assure Ontarians that those assets are being properly managed.

We will continue that process. We will engage in a public discussion around any options and all options that could be part of a future decision. But unlike the member opposite, we will continue to look at that. We’ll look at every aspect of the balance sheet, we’ll look at every aspect of the income statement, and we think that’s the right thing to do in these circumstances.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier, back when he was in opposition, was critical of schemes to sell off even a part of Hydro One. He said, “During the last three years, it earned a profit in excess of \$1 billion. Why would you not keep Hydro One entirely public and use those profits to help keep rates down...?”

It’s a good question. Why won’t the McGuinty government use the profit-making public assets Ontario owns to protect programs and services, and to make life more affordable for Ontarians?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The Premier and I both laid out the principles that would go into any transaction; that is, in fact, we would improve income as a result of any transaction involving assets. I think it’s incumbent upon us to look at those questions. When you have billions and billions of taxpayer monies tied up in a range of companies, it’s important to ensure that taxpayers and Ontarians in general are getting the best value for those particular assets.

Unlike the member opposite, I want to look at these things. I want to understand them and I want to ensure that, in fact, we’re maximizing income from those assets. It is the right thing to do, it is the appropriate thing to do, and I think Ontarians would see it that way after they’ve seen a whole bunch of other ideas and research. There have been no decisions taken.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Acting Premier talks a good game, but truthfully, I wouldn’t trust his government to manage a garage sale, let alone a multi-billion-dollar transaction involving Ontario’s public assets.

Selling off public assets might be good for the Premier, for his party and for investment bankers, but it’s sure going to be a raw deal for the people of this province.

My question is this: Why is the government so hell-bent on plowing ahead with a scheme that they once denounced as bad for Ontario families and that will likely leave them fleeced in the end?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I thought the voters in two ridings last week said what they thought about the New Democratic Party when they didn’t get their deposit back in either riding and when they came in fourth behind the Green Party in one of the two ridings.

It’s amazing what can happen to a once-great political party. I think it’s because they won’t look at these tough questions. They won’t examine things from what I would call an objective point of view, and look Ontarians in the eye and say, “You know what? Things are good here. Maybe that’s what we’ll find out,” or alternatively, “Maybe they’re not as good as they could be.”

I think it’s important to look at those issues. I think it’s important to assure Ontarians that our balance sheet is as strong as it can be, and as we move back into growth, we’re going to continue to do that in consultation with all Ontarians.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. John O’Toole: My question is to the Minister of Government Services. Minister, you would know that the Minister of Health’s assertion that she is repatriating the OHIP-funded procedures Dalton McGuinty has contracted out to the US health care providers is simply laughable. As the minister for procurement, you know that this is because you are the bulk buyer of health care from American hospitals and clinics. You signed the contracts.

Minister, you should acknowledge that this bulk-buying of US health care is making a mockery out of Ontario’s excellent health care system. Would you admit that here today?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: This question is for the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me set the record straight. It is absolutely not true that we’re paying US medical brokers to arrange procedures for Ontarians travelling out of the country for medical treatment.

The ministry uses one Canadian provider; it’s called the Canadian Medical Network. They look after very complex cases. Approximately 35 cases per year are looked after by the Canadian Medical Network. That is less than 1% of the cases. Once again, the members opposite need to get their facts straight.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John O’Toole: With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I redirect this back to the Minister of Government Services, because it does apply to the fact that on page 11 of your throne speech, the government says that no one who gets sick will be turned away. What they fail

to mention is that they will have to go to one of Dalton McGuinty's US health care brokers. There has been a report issued by Metroland that says that since last spring, McGuinty has signed health care contracts with 40 American hospitals and clinics, making them "preferred providers," while at the same time you're playing silly games with the opposition about proactive disclosure.

1100

Minister Takhar won't release the contracts he signed to send Ontario patients to US health care. My question to the minister is, are these more untendered contracts? Is there something else that Minister Takhar and Dalton McGuinty are trying to hide from the people of Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me speak to, actually, the largest group of patients who historically were sent out of the country. Those were patients who needed bariatric surgery. In the final years of the last regime of the Conservative government, they cut bariatric surgery in Ontario. Dr. Michael Grace in London was performing bariatric surgery; they shut that program down.

We are repatriating that program right now. This year, over 1,000 people who would have gone out of country for bariatric surgery received that program here in Ontario. Next year, that program will expand even further. The number of people leaving Ontario for bariatric surgery has now been reduced to a mere fraction of what it was.

We're making progress on out-of-country. Their goal is to introduce two-tier health care in Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question. The member for Beaches–East York.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): No, leave the clock going.

The honourable member knows the rules very clearly. If he's dissatisfied with an answer, he can call for a late show with the appropriate form being filed.

POVERTY

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

A key component of the McGuinty government's 2007 platform was poverty reduction. Specific action to reduce poverty was part of the 2007 throne speech, but to date almost nothing has happened except consultations. Moreover, yesterday's throne speech did not outline a focused strategy or set commitments to reduce poverty—not a single word. The Toronto Star called this virtual silence "disappointing."

My question: Has the government abandoned its election promise and its throne speech commitment of 2007 to implement a poverty reduction strategy?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: It's a great question, because of course this government has been very engaged since day one in poverty reduction. I think that I heard it mentioned also in the throne speech yesterday, so perhaps we were not at the same event, but I heard it.

This government has been very active. We have increased social assistance by 11% since we came to power. We raised the minimum wage to \$10.25 on March 1. We have created a poverty cabinet committee. We have fully implemented the OCB; it's up to \$1,100 annually. We have introduced the—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: This is the same minister who informed the House last week that they are looking at cutting off the special diet allowances.

Economic growth alone does not reduce poverty, and that's all you talked about yesterday. Yesterday's throne speech said nothing about affordable housing or about improving income security or about job security or access to child care—not a single word. Instead, it passed the buck, as this government is very good at doing, to the federal government and the poor community volunteers.

Will this government make the necessary investments in the upcoming budget to achieve its poverty reduction targets: yes or no?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Again, I don't think that this government has to take any lessons from that party. We have done a lot to reduce poverty and we will continue to do so. Every ministry has done something to help poverty in Ontario, including the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. Now the kids at age four and five will go to school, so it will help to identify those who need more help.

Again, we have increased social assistance. We have created this poverty cabinet committee. And in my ministry, I have appointed Gail Nyberg to help us to review the social system in Ontario. I'm very pleased to know that these people who have been—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is also for the Minister of Community and Social Services. With International Women's Day yesterday, I wish to raise the plight of women and children fleeing violence in my community and sadly in communities everywhere.

Many constituents of mine in Ottawa Centre have approached me with concerns for these individuals and families. Even though we are facing difficult economic times as a government, I feel very strongly that we need to provide support to those who need it, when they need it, as well as have the right to safety and security in our own community.

Will the minister share with my constituents what we have done in Ottawa Centre to help support women and their children who are victims of violence?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you for this question. I know the member from Ottawa Centre is very engaged in reducing violence against women.

I'm very proud to tell the member from Ottawa Centre that this government recently announced that we are

providing more than \$3 million to Interval House of Ottawa to construct a 25-bed women's shelter, providing jobs and building a stronger community foundation. At Interval House, these funds will support a new shelter to replace the existing facility. The new facility will offer expanded accessible services and enhancements to support Ottawa-area women and their children fleeing domestic violence.

I'm very happy to say that since 2003, funding for the violence against women program in the city of Ottawa has almost doubled. Furthermore, there are currently 123 emergency shelter beds available—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: As I mentioned previously, the safety of women and their children is a concern that is not isolated only to my riding or my city, but unfortunately across the province and beyond. Women have a fundamental right to enjoy safety and security in their own homes, but sometimes their homes simply cannot be a place of refuge for a threatened woman. This government must do what it can to help those fleeing violence, allowing women and children to remove themselves from harm and into a safe environment.

I would like to know how this government is improving services for women and families facing violence across Ontario.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I will redirect this question to the minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to thank the member from Ottawa Centre for his advocacy on this important issue and the work that he does with Crime Prevention Ottawa and so many groups who work hard in partnership with government to ensure that women and their children can be safe in their homes, in their communities, in their workplace.

This has been an issue of utmost importance to our government. We have invested more than \$208 million to protect women from violence and support victims of abuse. That includes our \$87-million domestic violence action plan.

More than 15,000 front-line professionals and service providers have been trained to detect domestic violence and support victims. We've strengthened our response in the justice system. We've made improvements in our family law courtrooms. We've helped women gain economic independence, with more than 1,200 abused or at-risk women receiving job training—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. On page 4 of the 2007 McGuinty throne speech, the government said, "To ensure it is more affordable, your government will deliver a new textbook and technology grant of \$300 for

university and college students to help them get started each year at school."

Minister, why did you say each student would receive a grant of \$300 when no students have received such a thing?

Hon. John Milloy: I'm very, very proud of our government's investments in post-secondary education. Since the introduction of the Reaching Higher plan, we've invested over \$6.2 billion, including \$1.5 billion to student aid. Part of that is an investment in the textbook and technology grant to every student who is eligible for OSAP.

1110

The member is correct: Our ambitious plan was \$300 a year, and because of financial circumstances we had to curb that. But students are still receiving an additional \$150 a year. I'd remind the honourable member of what happened when he was in office. He allowed tuition to go up by 71%, he cut student aid by 41% and he cut funding to institutions by \$435 million.

Yesterday, in our speech from the throne, we talked about further investments in post-secondary education because, unlike the party opposite, we recognize—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members will come to order, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Supplementary.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Minister, the grant promise was very clear; it was made three years ago. But it has become another case where Dalton McGuinty finds it is easier to make up new promises rather than to deliver on the old ones.

You said every college and university student would qualify for this program, but very few are actually getting the money, and they're getting half the money you promised. With great fanfare, it was a key plank in your 2007 throne speech, and within a few months after that throne speech you threw the promise right out and didn't keep it. A lot of students voted for you because they liked that promise. The fact of the matter is that you just make up things as you go along.

I ask you, why should Ontario students believe your big promise to expand spaces for international enrolment when you can't even deliver on your little promise to expand this grant program?

Hon. John Milloy: We've doubled investment in student aid since 2003. Hundreds of thousands of students have benefited from our dramatic increases in student assistance, and every OSAP-eligible student in this province receives the textbook and technology grant.

The facts are clear: We have a balanced approach over here. We have invested more in our institutions, and we have invested more in student assistance. That's a balanced approach. When that honourable member was in power, they had a balanced approach, too: They cut funding to institutions, and they cut assistance to students.

The fact of the matter is that we have a plan for the future—20,000 more spaces—and all we have heard from that party is a brand new logo. Maybe they should be focusing less on a new logo and more on a plan for post-secondary education in the province of Ontario.

PENSION REFORM

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Pension plan members at Nortel, Abitibi-Bowater and many other plans want me to ask why there was not one mention of pensions in the throne speech. Does this mean: (1) that there will be no Ontario pension agency to provide a home for stranded pensions, such as those at Nortel and AbitibiBowater? (2) that you will not increase to \$2,500 dollars the monthly benefit guarantee under the pension benefits guarantee fund, as recommended by Mr. Harry Arthurs? (3) that pension reform in Ontario is dead?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We just dealt with the Nortel pension, and that member and his party spoke against it at the time. They criticized us for dealing with it. No, there's a lot going on.

The member is right: We have a bill before the House today dealing with the first range of pension changes on defined benefit plans. I will be participating on behalf of Ontario at the next meeting of finance ministers. We began and the federal government is beginning a series of consultations this week. We began ours two years ago.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: We called for it.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We called for it. The Council of the Federation will be dealing with it.

The member is right. He speaks of Professor Arthurs's recommendation; what he hasn't told workers is that Professor Arthurs also says that that form of insurance has to be paid for, and that's an important issue. The NDP is never done pandering. They'll tell anybody what they want to hear without having what I would call a meaningful discussion about how we're going to pay for these things.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: That's a classic.

There is another group that looked for signs in the throne speech that pension reform in this province is still alive: 65%—that is over four million Ontarians—who have no workplace pension whatsoever.

The NDP has proposed a well-received Ontario retirement plan that would allow every working Ontarian to retire with dignity and security. Does the fact that there was not one mention of pensions in the throne speech mean that the Liberal government will continue to ignore the four million hard-working Ontarians who have no pension coverage whatsoever?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: No, it doesn't. In fact, this party has been engaging in very meaningful dialogue. As I indicated to the member and his party opposite, we welcome their participation in the discussion. There is much to do. There has to be what I would call a full discussion about the challenges associated with this. For

instance, their plan, which looks similar to an RRSP plan, only run by the government, doesn't address the question that close to \$90 billion in unused RRSP room is out there; that is, people haven't been contributing. So they don't deal with that fundamental question, which is important. That's not to diminish the importance of looking at options like what the NDP has put forward. I think it's a very realistic view. It's certainly more than doing a new logo. We look forward to a robust discussion with all Ontarians as we move forward, and we'll have more to say about pensions and these matters in the coming days and weeks.

HEALTH PROMOTION

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is to the Minister of Health Promotion.

On January 25th of this year, the Heart and Stroke Foundation's 2010 annual report on Canadians' health warned that a perfect storm of risk factors and demographic changes are converging to create an unprecedented burden on Ontario's system of cardiovascular care. No Ontarian, young or old, will be left unaffected. Clearly, the face of heart disease is changing. Young adults, women, baby boomers, and ethnocultural and aboriginal peoples now comprise the new heart disease demographic.

Minister, what is the government of Ontario doing to address these alarming trends? How will Ontario weather the storm?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleague, the member from Guelph, for all her hard work and for the question as well. I want to thank the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario for their research and advice on cardiovascular disease. We are grateful to count them among our partners in prevention.

The McGuinty government is working with a wide variety of community-based partners, including the Heart and Stroke Foundation, on several strategies targeted at high-risk populations. In 2009-10, we are investing \$6.6 million in aboriginal-specific health promotion programming. Our EatRight Ontario service provides free nutrition and healthy eating advice by registered dietitians online or by telephone. Our healthy communities fund invests in local communities to promote physical activity and healthy eating, particularly—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: The Heart and Stroke Foundation's report also touched on a topic that is near and dear to all of our hearts: the health of our children. The foundation's Spark Together for Healthy Kids campaign points out that 28% of Ontario kids are overweight and obese, an alarming trend that will have grave consequences for our already overburdened health care system.

What is the government doing to promote healthy food choices and physical activity for our children and their families?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: We know that obesity is an epidemic that we must all work together to combat. Certainly, there's a role for government. However, government cannot do it alone. Parents, adults and everyone has an important role to play in instilling positive habits in our children and in making gains in the fight against obesity.

This year we are spending \$22.5 million to support amateur sports in Ontario, to increase opportunities for youth to get involved in sports and physical activities in their communities. This government now mandates 20 minutes of physical activity and requires healthier food choices in schools. As part of our Ontario poverty reduction strategy, we have rolled out Ontario's after-school initiative, a program for children and youth in priority communities that provides physical activity, nutrition and wellness programs. Our government has instituted a \$741-million—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question?

1120

SENIORS' HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, despite the Liberal promises, there are growing concerns in this province that the needs of seniors are simply not being addressed. People are calling and coming to our offices—families and patients. There is no place for our seniors to go.

We're now in the third year of the four-year aging-at-home strategy. The wait-list for long-term-care beds is increasing, and there is no community care support. Today, there are 26,000 people waiting for a long-term-care bed. Compare that to 12,000 in 2005.

I ask you today: What do you say to the seniors who are desperate, and the families who are even more so, about the long-term-care need and community care support need?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the question, to talk about some of the improvements that we're making to health care, especially for our seniors.

I just want to take the opportunity to correct a rather remarkable mention in the press release of the Conservative Party after the throne speech that said that we have not put a single shovel in the ground or cut a ribbon when it comes to long-term-care homes. It simply isn't true. What I'd like to be able to do right now is to talk about the long-term-care homes that have opened.

The Ukrainian Canadian Care Centre in Etobicoke has opened 32 beds. AON Inc. in Tweed has opened 128. Crown Ridge Place in Trenton has opened 32. Trent Valley Lodge in Trenton has opened 32. Bradford Valley in Bradford—and I'm sure your colleague from York-Simcoe would be happy to tell you about this particular long-term-care home—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Again to the Minister of Health: Any numbers that you've just mentioned are

totally insignificant when we have a wait-list of 26,000 people that has grown from 12,000. You've now had over six years to address the needs.

I want to tell you about a woman in my riding. She's 68. She had an aneurysm and she had a stroke. She was ready to leave the hospital, but there was no long-term-care bed available for at least six months, and now she'll wait in that hospital. About 17% of all the other hospital beds in the province are currently occupied by people like Louise, alternative-level-of-care patients who have nowhere to go.

Minister, you and I both know that is not a home-like environment. There's no respect; there's no privacy; there's no dignity. I ask you today, what are you going to do for this aging population—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: There is nothing in the member opposite's question that I actually don't agree with: We need to do better when it comes to providing better care for those in our hospitals who do not need to be in our hospitals.

But in fairness, when the Conservative Party was in office, they cut the home care services that seniors depend on by a 22% cut in nursing and a 30% cut in homemaking services between the years 2001 and 2003. In the recent election, there was no aging-at-home strategy at all.

There is more good news coming for people across this province when it comes to long-term care: The Homewood Corp. in London is opening 192 beds; the Korean Home Development Society in Toronto is opening 60 beds; peopleCare in London, another 160 beds; the McCausland Hospital in Terrace Bay, 22 beds; Oneida Nation of the Thames in—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question?

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Why does the McGuinty government's five-year plan ignore women?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In fact, there are a range of programs that are designed to help women. First of all, my colleague opposite mentions women are part of the economy, an important part of the economy. There are far too many women who aren't working today who we want to help get a job. I believe women will work in the new clean energy economy. Hopefully, women will work in equal proportion to men, and hopefully they'll be paid equally to men.

I think women will work in the clean water industry. I think women care about clean water for their communities and for their children, whether it's a farm community or a city. I believe women care enormously about that. I think women care enormously about the Ontario child benefit, which that member and her party voted against. Every part of this plan is about women. It's

about a better economy. It's about a better economy for their children and their grandchildren. In fact, they benefit—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This government delivered a throne speech on International Women's Day with no mention of what they are going to do to help women through these tough economic times, a throne speech that failed to address the 22,000 child care spaces across Ontario that are on the chopping block, a throne speech that ignored the continuing wage disparity between women and men, a throne speech that made no mention whatsoever of improving home care and long-term care, of which women—we know—are the primary caregivers.

As women across Ontario continue to fight for social and economic equality, why is the McGuinty government turning its back on them?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think women care about the fact that we're introducing full-day learning, and that is being introduced at a time when the economy is struggling. I think women care a lot that more than 800,000 Ontario families now have a family doctor. I think mothers and grandmothers and sisters care about that. I think women will prosper from our investments in the clean economy—clean energy and clean water. Women care passionately about the poor, and that's why we brought in the Ontario child benefit, a plan that will help single moms, will help mothers who are struggling get better, which that member and her party voted against.

This government has laid out a plan that benefits children, that benefits women, that benefits our visible minorities and that benefits new Canadians. It's about all Ontarians, about building a bigger, better and stronger Ontario because, as the Premier says, working together, we're much better than when we work apart—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Mr. David Oraziatti: My question is to the Attorney General and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Minister, residents in the communities of Garden River First Nation and the Batchewana First Nation near Sault Ste. Marie, like all Ontarians, have been affected by the current economic crisis. I have met with both Chief Lyle Sayers and Chief Dean Sayers on economic development projects, the proposed harmonized sales tax and other issues as well. I understand that they have written to the Ontario government regarding their concerns.

Minister, I understand that you have met with them as well. Can you please tell me what action we are taking to address the concerns of the Batchewana First Nation and the Garden River First Nation?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I'd like to thank the member for the work that he's been doing with both Dean Sayers, of Batchewana First Nation, and Lyle

Sayers, of Garden River First Nation—enormously important. Where we start is a changed relationship. Premier McGuinty has made it a signal point of our government to change the historical relationship with First Nations and aboriginal people by determining to work co-operatively, in consultation on projects such as economic development, such as social development, such as the land claims issues and historical obligations of Ontario to our First Nations and aboriginal peoples.

We have, through the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, just over the past couple of years, put millions of dollars into capacity building, specifically to ensure that First Nations have the capacity and the ability to deal in a more productive and consultative way and in terms of economic development—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. David Oraziatti: Minister, residents of both area First Nations have also expressed concerns about the potential impact of the HST—specifically, that they may lose their current point-of-sale exemption that Ontario continues to support. Recently, a federal Conservative member from the Kenora region was in Sault Ste. Marie and said the responsibility for the impact of the tax on the Anishinabek communities lies squarely on the shoulders of the Ontario government.

Minister, given that the federal government has the responsibility for administering the tax, what steps has our government taken to retain the point-of-sale tax exemption for First Nations when the harmonized sales tax comes into effect July 1, 2010?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: My colleague is absolutely right. The federal government administers and will administer the harmonized sales tax. They have the responsibility for ensuring its administration. When I met with both Dean Sayers and Lyle Sayers of the two First Nations communities, they made the point—and I confirm the point—that we stand together with our First Nations in being determined to ensure that our historical Ontario approach to the point-of-sale exemption for the PST portion of the new harmonized tax will continue. We stand together with them—absolutely. We have written to the federal government, we have received correspondence from the Prime Minister and we are now working with our First Nations to obtain the information necessary to ensure that Ontario's historical recognition for First Nations point-of-sale exemption will continue—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

1130

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Dalton McGuinty talks about the Ring of Fire more than the Man in Black ever did, but really, the Premier is a man who is keeping Ontario in the red. Do you have an actual plan for mining

or will you surprise the chromite miners with a new tax, just as you did with the diamond miners?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I appreciate the question. Certainly there is a tremendous amount of excitement in northern Ontario related to the economic potential of the Ring of Fire. I can tell you that northerners are very excited that it is part of our Open Ontario plan.

The potential for this site is quite remarkable. We're looking at thousands of jobs—thousands of direct jobs and thousands of indirect jobs. But we recognize that, indeed, in order for us to make this project move forward we need to do it the right way, which is why our ministry is working very closely with the mining companies, the First Nation communities and with northerners in general to make sure we move forward. In fact, our ministry officials brought the mining companies up to Webequie and Martin Falls First Nations a couple of weeks ago. I'll be going up there myself to visit a number of communities next week.

We recognize that in order for this to succeed, it needs to be done right. But no matter what, it's an extraordinarily exciting development; we'd love to have you onside with us. This has got great potential in northern Ontario, one of the greatest finds in over a century—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Hillier: Dalton McGuinty said in his throne speech, "There is no substitute for chromite," but the Liberals' Bill 191 cuts off 50% of all of Ontario's rich, northern resources from any and all development whatsoever. This government is nothing but a walking contradiction—actually, a sitting contradiction is more appropriate.

The Premier is right to think that the resource sector is important to Ontario's future, so will you commit, Minister, to developing those resources wherever they are in the north regardless of Bill 191?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: We are very committed and very excited about the opportunities that are presented by the Ring of Fire, the opportunities that will bring economic potential and fabulous jobs all across northern Ontario.

It's very important to point out as well that, indeed, the actual site we're looking at is a relatively small site in terms of the Far North. We're working very closely with all the First Nations to make sure we move forward. In fact, this morning I was at a Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada convention and witnessed the signing, along with my colleague Minister Jeffrey, of four First Nations who want to collaborate with us and their First Nation community partners to move this project forward.

We are developing a plan, we are working closely with them and we are committed to having this work. The Premier, of course, is very committed to it. We are excited about this; we just wish you were. We'd love to have your support. This is a tremendous opportunity for all of northern Ontario. We want to move forward to provide the jobs this great project can do.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Yesterday's throne speech did, indeed, trumpet the mining potential of the Ring of Fire in northern Ontario, but my question is this: Can the minister explain why two of the six First Nations located closest to the Ring of Fire are continuing to conduct a blockade at the ice landing strips meant to service the mining industry? While the government is trumpeting this, why are the two First Nations who live closest to this and whose traditional lands are concerned, in fact, blockading and protesting one of the very things that your ministry and your government has approved?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I appreciate the question. I think it's important to point out that, indeed, there is no real argument in the fact that everyone does see the potential of this. Certainly, the First Nations communities very much see the economic benefits that can come to their communities. I think they want to make sure that indeed they do accrue those benefits. The discussions that are going on between our ministry, the First Nations and the mining companies are very important. Even with the situation that's happening right now, we're working on it on a daily basis, in discussions.

Again, it's probably important to point out that the issues that are going on are really about how the First Nations communities can properly benefit from this great opportunity, which is why we tend to see this as a wonderful chance for us—our ministry and our government in terms of the Open Ontario plan—to work with them on this. That's why I'm going up to the communities next week. I'm looking forward to being in Marten Falls, Webequie and other communities as well.

We are going to continue to work with them closely, help the mining companies better understand the need to work with them so that this—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I did not hear an answer. At the same time that the McGuinty government boasts, the two First Nations who live immediately adjacent to the Ring of Fire are in fact, in 20-, 30-below weather, conducting a blockade of an airstrip that you approved.

But it's not just those First Nations. Kasabonika Lake First Nation has dozens of members of their community who are trained in prospecting and mining exploration. How many of those people are being employed by the companies who are interested in the Ring of Fire? Zero.

Eabametoong First Nation hears over the news that a company is considering building a 400-kilometre railway through their traditional territory. Any consultation or discussion with the First Nation? None.

My question is this: Did the McGuinty Liberals learn anything from the debacle you created between Platinox and Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation? It doesn't seem so, because you seem to be on the same road here.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: There is no question that the First Nations involved have real concerns about making

sure that they are able to benefit from the huge economic potential of this project, and we're working with them to see this happens.

The important thing is that all parties are working towards a resolution of the issues right now. There's a distinct difference between the situation you described in terms of KI and Platinex. That was about a community that didn't want to have development in their area. Obviously, we worked to resolve their concerns as well.

The very significant and positive difference is, this is about communities that want to be sure that the economic development that may come from this fabulous deposit of chromite does accrue appropriately to their community. That's why we're working with them, I say to the member. That's why we're making sure our ministry officials work with the mining companies to see that those benefits do accrue.

This is important for all of northern Ontario, all the First Nations communities, and we are going to continue to work with them. I'm looking forward to having the opportunity of being up there myself, to work with them closely.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, I need to correct the record. The minimum wage will increase on March 31, not March 1. The OCB is now up to 11%, but it's going to be fully implemented by—

Interjection.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Right now, it's \$1,100 per child per year and it's going to go up to \$1,300 by 2013.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1138 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask all members to join me in welcoming to the Speaker's gallery Gilles Morin, the member from Carleton East, 34th, 35th and 36th Parliaments, as well as Deputy Speaker from 1990 to 1997. Welcome back to the Legislature, Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

APOLOGY

Mr. Bill Murdoch: Mr. Speaker, first, I want to apologize to you for my actions of November 30 through December 2, 2009. I have the utmost respect for the way you do your job, and I appreciate how well you treated me when I served as an independent member in the Legislature. I also want to apologize to your staff, including the clerks and security guards, for any inconvenience I may have caused them.

But I have no regret for doing my job—for calling a spade a spade. Throughout my 30 years in elected office, I have always believed in the importance of exercising one of our basic freedoms, the freedom of speech. I have every intention of continuing to voice my opinion, because I believe it is of the utmost importance to represent my community, to stand for the people who, by electing me, placed their faith in me to carry their concerns to Queen's Park.

In my view, a government that's a government of the people, by the people, for the people should be applauded because they are so confident in their leadership, so certain of their direction, that they allow members to think, to vote, to react, to represent and to call a spade a spade when necessary.

But these are truly cynical times in Ontario politics.

In yesterday's throne speech, this government talked about its five-year plan. Let's talk about the government's last-six-years plan that turned Ontario into a have-not province, saddled it with the largest deficit in its history, a whopping \$25 billion, and saddled Ontarians with the two largest tax hikes. God help us if we have to put up with another five years of this government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just want to take this opportunity to thank the honourable member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound for the apology.

MANITOUWADGE SKI HILL

Mr. Michael A. Brown: About three years ago, the township of Manitouwadge made an application to the municipal infrastructure investment initiative of the government of Ontario. Prior to making the application, Randy Mattson, Ed Hedderson and I discussed the project and visited the site. The happy news arrived: As one of the 22 projects approved in the riding of Algoma-Manitoulin, the project for Manitouwadge was given the green light.

I had the privilege of accompanying town councillors to Manitouwadge Public School, where we announced to the grade 5 class of Mr. Othello Jones, the famous OJ, that 750,000 provincial dollars were to be allocated to the upgrading of the ski hill.

Three weeks ago, I was pleased and excited to visit the upgraded Kiwissa Ski Centre, which features a number of improvements, including the only snow-making equipment in the area. The addition of the equipment has allowed the hill to open in early December and provide amazing skiing throughout the winter, despite a lack of snow in the area.

I returned last Friday to the classroom of Mr. Jones to close the loop. I had had a large photograph presented to me, including many of the students who were now in Mr. Jones's grade 5 class.

I want to congratulate all those who were involved in this exciting project. I want to convey a special thank you to the ski hill operator, Dave Jung, for his outstanding work. It's truly an amazing facility.

APOLOGY

Mr. Randy Hillier: A government's majority status is neither a reason nor an excuse for them to abuse their position and disregard dissenting voices. Even a majority government must respect their mandate and the people.

Last December, I was suspended because I protested the arbitrary imposition of Dalton's new sales tax. I had asked the government for public consultation, and I was rebuked.

I would like to reiterate my devotion to the institution of this Legislature, for which I have the highest regard. I sincerely apologize that my protest put me at odds with both this institution and your Chair.

But I will not hesitate to defend either my constituents or my convictions, should the need arise. This institution does not stand on stones and mortar nor party discipline; it stands upon independent thought, honest convictions and the passion to protect the people's freedom and whose integrity is the foundation of Canadian democracy.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to thank the member from Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington for his apology.

INCONTINENCE

Mr. Peter Kormos: Without experiencing incontinence and the issues related to it, it's hard for any of us to even begin to imagine the impact that it has on a person's life. Yet most adults past the age of 65 suffer incontinence at some level. That's not to say that it's restricted only to seniors, but seniors are the largest community of people who live with incontinence. Regrettably, of people affected, only 30% or so even discuss it with their doctors.

Seniors living on fixed incomes, many of them below the poverty line, simply can't afford the \$1,000 to \$3,000 a year that it costs to provide oneself with incontinence products.

If you lived down in Niagara, you'd know Jack O'Neil of Port Colborne. He's a senior, and he has been a seniors' advocate for a long time, as one of the founding members of the Niagara Gatekeepers. He has been writing to the Minister of Health since 2004 asking for funding to assist seniors with incontinence products.

There is still no funding through OHIP, assistive devices or even Trillium, and there was no mention of it in the throne speech. I say it's time. The tenacity of Jack O'Neil should be given credit—for saying it's time that this government support those seniors living with incontinence.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise in the House today to congratulate the Oakville community on their recent recognition by the Ontario Heritage Trust.

The town of Oakville received the 2009 Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for their outstanding

and sustained efforts in municipal heritage conservation. Town council has designated 10 properties for preservation since 2007. Last year, Oakville added an incredible 350 properties to the heritage register.

Former mayor Harry Barrett received the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Lifetime Achievement for supporting Oakville's heritage for more than 55 years.

Many additional Oakville residents were also recognized by the Ontario Heritage Trust, including: Francine Landry and Andy Bruce for their support of Oakville's heritage, Fred Hayward for his dedication in honouring Oakville's cultural heritage, Liz Benneian for her ongoing commitment to preserving Oakville's natural heritage, young Clayton Trovato for his advocacy for the continued protection of the Smith's old stone farmhouses, and Pam Calvert's grade 10 enhanced Canadian history class at Oakville Trafalgar High School for their Oakville Trafalgar grade 10 Great War project.

I'd like to congratulate each award winner on this recognition. I'd like to thank them for their dedication to the community, in protecting and promoting Oakville's rich and varied heritage for all future generations.

MIDWIFERY CLINIC

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise today and congratulate Linda Stahl and Stephanie McDonnell on the opening of their midwifery clinic this afternoon at the Headwaters Health Care Centre. Linda and Stephanie have been working very hard over the past two years to establish this clinic in the community.

The midwifery clinic responds to the needs of families who have been travelling to Mississauga, Alliston and Guelph to receive the services of a midwife.

1510

Midwives play an important role in providing care for families before and after the birth of their child. They provide prenatal care, can order blood work and ultrasounds, provide birthing care and monitor the health of mother and child for up to six weeks after birth. Their clinic will free up family doctors to perform non-obstetrical procedures, and since our community has been designated as an underserved area, the midwifery program is a welcome addition to ease the burden on our family physicians.

As Dufferin—Caledon continues to grow and more young families settle here, the midwifery program at Headwaters Health Care Centre will be a welcome addition. I want to thank Linda and Stephanie for all of their hard work to establish a clinic in our community.

PAKISTAN DAY

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Last Saturday, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Dr. Eric Hoskins, and I had the pleasure of attending a Pakistan Day event in Ottawa. The event was organized by the Canada Pakistan Association of the National Capital Region.

The event was entitled Journey to Pakistan, and what a journey that was. With dances, a fashion show demonstrating different colours and clothing, and a very impressive video presentation, the organizers really portrayed the rich value of the Pakistani culture and what it means for our Canadian society.

In addition, the event recognized some distinguished Pakistani Canadians who have given back to the community. In particular, an award was given to Mr. Mohammed Azhar Ali Khan, who is a well-known community leader in Ottawa and a recipient of the Order of Canada and the Order of Ontario; also, Dr. M. Husain Sadar, who is a leading expert in environmental and human health. It was really good to see those two gentlemen being recognized.

I want to extend my deepest congratulations to Ms. Lubna Syed, who is the president of the association, and their executive for the hard work they did in organizing this very impressive event. A special thanks to the two masters of ceremonies, Mr. Javed Soomra and Ms. Sana Syed, who did an incredible job of engaging the audience.

There were hundreds of people who attended the event and it was a great showcase of Pakistani-Canadian culture.

PROVINCIAL FRANCOPHONE
YOUTH PARLIAMENT
PARLEMENT JEUNESSE
FRANCOPHONE DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Tomorrow, 60 students from 39 French-language high schools will descend on Queen's Park for a mock parliament. This year marks the fourth annual Parlement jeunesse francophone de l'Ontario. The participants from all corners of the province are ready to assume their roles as MPPs, journalists, or NGO representatives.

Il me fait plaisir de souhaiter la bienvenue aux élèves, aux enseignants et aux animateurs et animatrices de la Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne. Un des objectifs de ce Parlement jeunesse est de permettre aux élèves d'exprimer des opinions et de défendre une position, tout en développant leur capacité de leadership.

Je tiens à remercier Thérèse Nadeau du ministère de l'Éducation, Magalie-France Houle de l'équipe FESFO, ainsi que Christine Pelletier de mon bureau, pour leurs efforts au succès de ce projet.

Ce Parlement jeunesse francophone est une des meilleures façons d'assurer la relève en politique. L'Ontario a besoin des jeunes énergétiques qui souhaitent se dévouer pour leur communauté.

I invite everyone in this chamber to join us at 9:05 tomorrow morning for a group photo on the grand staircase, followed by a reception in committee room 230. Please join us tomorrow morning to welcome this year's PJFO students.

ARTEM OTCHAKOVSKI

Ms. M. Aileen Carroll: It is with great sorrow that I speak today about the death of a 36-year-old officer, a police officer who resided in the city of Barrie with his wife and his son.

Constable Artem—James—Otchakovski served with courage and dedication with the Peel Regional Police. He helped to make that community a safer place in which to live.

But his service to that community was ended by a terrible tragedy on March 1. The constable was responding to a non-emergency call to assist another police officer when a car accident occurred, resulting in his death.

This is the very first time in 25 years that a Peel Regional Police officer has lost his life while on duty, and it is a tragedy that has greatly impacted that community.

The funeral services are taking place this afternoon. I would like to convey my sympathy and condolences to the family, his friends and his colleagues, those friends of Constable Otchakovski who are joining us today to honour his life and his service both to that community and to this province.

Perhaps it would be appropriate to stand for a moment of silence as we join those who are at the funeral service this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd ask all members to join us in tribute to our fallen police officer.

The House observed a moment's silence.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry concerning northern Ontario's Ring of Fire. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MENINGITIS AWARENESS
DAY ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE JOUR
DE LA SENSIBILISATION
À LA MÉNINGITE

Ms. Pendergast moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to proclaim April 24 in each year as Meningitis Awareness Day/ Projet de loi 2, Loi proclamant le 24 avril de chaque année Jour de la sensibilisation à la méningite.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement?

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: Proclaiming April 24 as Meningitis Awareness Day in Ontario supports the work and efforts of the Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada by heightening awareness of meningitis and dedicating a day to sharing best practices, information and research that are all essential to ensuring that no family loses a loved one to this disease.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding committee membership.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that the following changes be made to the membership of the following committees:

On the Standing Committee on Estimates, Mr. Ramal be replaced by Ms. Mangat;

On the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, Mr. Hoskins be replaced by Mr. Murray;

On the Standing Committee on General Government, Ms. Mangat be replaced by Mr. Levac;

On the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, Mr. Johnson be replaced by Ms. Cansfield and Mr. Naqvi be replaced by Ms. Carroll;

On the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, Mr. Leal be replaced by Mr. Colle and Mr. Levac be replaced by Mr. Moridi;

On the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Brownell be replaced by Mr. Sergio, Mr. Johnson be replaced by Ms. Mangat and Mr. Ramal be replaced by Mr. Naqvi;

On the Standing Committee on Public Accounts, Mr. McNeely be replaced by Ms. Carroll;

On the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills, Mr. Balkissoon be replaced by Mr. Rinaldi, Mr. Colle be replaced by Mr. Leal and Mr. Sergio be replaced by Mr. Caplan;

On the Standing Committee on Social Policy, Ms. Aggelonitis be replaced by Mr. Ramal, Ms. Jeffrey be replaced by Mr. Johnson and Ms. Mitchell be replaced by Mr. McMeekin.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.
1520

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following changes be made to the ballot list for private members' public business: Ms. Pendergast and Ms. Van Bommel exchange places in order of precedence such that Ms. Pendergast assumes ballot item number 1 and Ms. Van Bommel assumes ballot item number 44; and Mr. Berardinetti, Mr. Flynn and Ms. Albanese exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Berardinetti assumes ballot item number 3, Mr. Flynn assumes ballot item number 13 and Ms. Albanese assumes ballot item number 64; and that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items numbers 1 and 3.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

ELMVALE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Elmvale District High School is an important part of the community of Elmvale and surrounding area; and

"Whereas the school is widely recognized as having high educational" requirements "and is well known for producing exceptional graduates who have gone on to work as professionals in health care, agriculture, community safety, the trades and many other fields that give back to the community; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that 'Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn't found any money to keep an actual rural school open in Elmvale;

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

"That the Minister of Education support the citizens of Elmvale and flow funding to the local school board so that Elmvale District High School can remain open to serve the vibrant community of Elmvale and surrounding area."

I agree with this petition, and I'll sign it.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Bill Mauro: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas we currently have no psychiatric emergency service at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to support the creation of a psychiatric emergency service in emergency at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre in Thunder Bay, Ontario.”

I support this petition, and I will affix my signature to it.

RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY

Mr. Bill Murdoch: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas to cover the cost of reconstructive surgery when a patient has had extreme weight loss after bariatric surgery, as these surgeries are not covered under OHIP and are at present considered cosmetic;

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

“That when patients have ... surgery and lose the required amount of weight and keep it off, they also have another set of health care issues that can be very costly to take care of. As these individuals lose weight, they end up with so much excess skin and fat pockets that no amount of exercise will take care of it. This excess skin and folds in the skin can cause anything from boils, cysts, skin infections and more that have to be cared for constantly in hospital emergency rooms and cared for by agencies like community care access centres. If preventative reconstructive surgeries are not approved, the constant medical care will cost the taxpayer much more money as said health issues would cost over time.”

I’ve signed this, and I had this sent to me by Shelley Kennedy.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: This petition is from St. Matthew High School.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring ‘abrupt and irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species;’ and

“Whereas no one group, country or continent is responsible for climate change, but where all human beings are collectively responsible for solving the problem; and

“Whereas the production of greenhouse gases in Canada has increased by 27% over 1990 levels; and

“Whereas our elected leaders have a responsibility to report to the public on their actions with respect to halting climate change for the sake of accountability; and

“Whereas youth in particular have a special interest in this issue, being those that will inherit this earth, our only home.

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change.”

The first three people on this are Nandau Wandji, Jamie Roelofs and Anna Abraszko. I submit this and sign it in support.

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have here a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, on which I have thousands of signatures.

“Whereas residents of Oxford do not want Dalton McGuinty’s new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$500,000; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families, farmers and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families.”

I affix my signature as I agree with this petition.

TAXATION

Mr. Peter Shurman: I have a petition here from the people of Thornhill addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s plan to blend the PST with the GST into one 13% harmonized sales tax represents one of the largest tax hikes in Ontario history, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

“This new tax ... will raise the cost of a long list of goods and services not previously subject to provincial sales tax, including: electricity; home heating oil and gas at the pump; haircuts; ... Internet and cable; home renovations; heating; air conditioning repairs; accounting, legal and real estate fees; condo fees; new home sales; rents will also go up; minor hockey registration fees will increase; and green fees and gym fees will also be taxed;

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

"That the McGuinty government not impose this new tax on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and give it to page Sarah.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: I have a petition here from St. Matthew High School. Talyn Johnson, Maura Tubridy and Grace Boivin are the first three signatures on it.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring 'abrupt and irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species;' and

"Whereas no one group, country or continent is responsible for climate change, but where all human beings are collectively responsible for solving the problem; and

"Whereas the production of greenhouse gases in Canada has increased by 27% over 1990 levels; and

"Whereas our elected leaders have a responsibility to report to the public on their actions with respect to halting climate change for the sake of accountability; and

"Whereas youth in particular have a special interest in this issue, being those that will inherit this earth, our only home.

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

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change."

I will put my signature on this and send this up with Max.

TAXATION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas residents in Dufferin-Caledon do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$400,000; and

"Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships ... and lawyer and accountant fees; and

"Whereas the blended sales tax will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

"That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families."

I am proud to affix my name to this petition and give it to page Colin.

TAXATION

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It says:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty's plan to blend the PST with the GST into one 13% harmonized sales tax represents one of the largest tax hikes in Ontario history, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it; and

"This new tax, which we are calling the DST (Dalton sales tax), will raise the cost of a long list of goods and services not previously subject to provincial sales tax, including"—but not excepting—"electricity; home heating oil and gas at the pump; haircuts; newspapers and magazines; Internet and cable; home renovations; heating and air conditioning repairs; accounting, legal and real estate fees; condo fees; new home sales; rents will also go up" to some extent; "minor hockey registration fees will increase; and green fees and gym fees will also be taxed;

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

"That the McGuinty government not impose this new tax on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses."

I agree with this, affix my signature to it and send it down with Rachael.

1530

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas several paramedics in Simcoe county had their pensions affected when paramedic services were transferred to the county of Simcoe, as their pensions were not transferred with them from HOOPP and OPTrust to OMERS, meaning they will receive significantly reduced pensions because their transfer did not recognize their years of continuous service; and

"Whereas when these paramedics started with their new employer, the county of Simcoe, their past pensionable years were not recognized because of existing pension legislation; and

"Whereas the government's own Expert Commission on Pensions has recommended that government move swiftly to address this issue; and

"Whereas the government should recognize this issue as a technicality and not penalize hard-working paramedics;

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

"That Premier McGuinty support Simcoe-Grey MPP Jim Wilson's resolution that calls upon the government to address this issue immediately and ensure that any legislation or regulation allows paramedics in Simcoe county who were affected by the divestment of

paramedic services in the 1990s and beyond to transfer their pensions from HOOPP or OPTrust to OMERS.”

Obviously, I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Phil McNeely: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its 2007 report, concluded that without dramatic reductions in human-induced carbon dioxide emissions, climate change may bring ‘abrupt and irreversible effects on oceans, glaciers, land, coastlines and species;’ and

“Whereas no one group, country or continent is responsible for climate change, but where all human beings are collectively responsible for solving the problem; and

“Whereas the production of greenhouse gases in Canada has increased by 27% over 1990 levels; and

“Whereas our elected leaders have a responsibility to report to the public on their actions with respect to halting climate change for the sake of accountability; and

“Whereas youth in particular have a special interest in this issue, being those that will inherit this earth, our only home.

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario swiftly pass Bill 208, An Act to increase awareness of climate change.”

The first three names on this petition are Keira Fletcher, Danielle Ricker and Tiana Cornfield, and it’s from St. Matthew High School. I support this petition and will send it up with Max.

CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas Ontario is one of the few provinces that does not have independent oversight of child welfare administration; and

“Whereas eight provinces now have independent oversight of child welfare issues, including child protection; and

“Whereas all provincial Ombudsmen first identified child protection as a priority issue in 1986 and still Ontario does not allow the Ombudsman to investigate people’s complaints about children’s aid societies’ decisions; and

“Whereas people wronged by CAS decisions concerning placement, access, custody or care are not allowed to appeal those decisions to the Ontario Ombudsman’s office;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we support the Ombudsman having the power to probe decisions and

investigate complaints concerning the province’s children’s aid societies (CAS).”

I have signed this.

TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here that was given to me by Heidi Van Riesen from the great town of Tillsonburg, and I would like to present it on behalf of all the people who signed it.

“Whereas the residents of Oxford do not want Dalton McGuinty’s new sales tax, which will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to home sales over \$500,000; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax of 13% will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals’ new sales tax grab will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families, farmers and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario families.”

I’ll affix my signature as I agree with the petition.

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: “Whereas the hard-working residents of Simcoe–Grey do not want a harmonized sales tax (HST) that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4, electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snowplowing, air conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, vet bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

“Whereas the blended sales tax will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers.”

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

TAXATION

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty said he wouldn’t raise taxes in the 2003 election, but in 2004 he brought in a brand new tax on income that they inaccurately claimed was going to health care; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty will increase taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s new 13% sales tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day, such as: coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas at the pumps; home heating oil and electricity; postage stamps; haircuts; dry cleaning; home renovations; veterinary care; and arena ice and soccer field rentals;

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

“That the Dalton McGuinty government wake up to Ontario’s current economic reality and stop raising taxes, once and for all, on Ontario’s hard-working families and businesses.”

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Monique M. Smith: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In the second motion that I moved, regarding private members’ public business, I misspoke. The last paragraph should read, “That, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items numbers 1, 2 and 3.”

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 9, 2010, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I plan to share my time with the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka and the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

It is an honour to stand in the House today and deliver my first response to a throne speech as leader of the official opposition.

Before I begin my response, I want to take a moment and extend my prayers and condolences and that of the entire PC caucus to the families of the two fallen police officers: Peel Regional Police officer Artem “James” Otchakovski and OPP Constable Vu Pham.

James Otchakovski was tragically killed in the line of duty last week and was laid to rest this afternoon. I know the Premier was in attendance. Garfield Dunlop, our

critic and a strong supporter of police in Ontario, was representing the Ontario PC caucus.

Tragically, yesterday Constable Vu Pham of the Ontario Provincial Police, a 37-year-old father of three, was shot and killed in the line of duty.

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, I want to extend our deepest sympathies to the families and colleagues of both officers. While these tragedies have brought deep sorrow and grief, their families can take solace in knowing that these men are heroes and made the ultimate sacrifice in the effort to keep our neighbourhoods and streets safe from harm. We are forever in their debt.

Applause.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I appreciate the kind response from all members of the assembly in all parties.

I’d now like to proceed with the beginning of the PC caucus response to the McGuinty government’s throne speech, to the extent that one can offer a response to a speech that, quite frankly, failed to set out any plan to help Ontario families squeezed by job losses, higher taxes and reduced government programs; completely failed to set out a path to get Ontario’s economy working again; and completely failed to address the growing dire fiscal status of the province of Ontario.

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This throne speech, after much buildup, was a great disappointment. One wonders how much farther Ontario needs to fall before the McGuinty government takes notice and takes action.

As I travel around this province and speak to Ontario families, small business owners and seniors, they simply cannot believe what has happened to the province of Ontario these past six years. Once the powerhouse of Confederation, the engine that drove this entire country, Ontario now has fallen to have-not status. Once a magnet for jobs and opportunity, we now have soaring unemployment. Once the home to the best schools, hospitals and roads, we now have crumbling infrastructure, growing waiting lists for cancer patients, growing lists for seniors trying to get into long-term-care homes—and in response, a growing industry of Dalton McGuinty US health care brokers.

But I guess, upon review, perhaps we shouldn’t be surprised about the lack of new ideas and new direction in yesterday’s throne speech, because if we look at the pattern of Dalton McGuinty’s previous throne speeches, quite frankly, they’re not worth the paper they’re written on.

Speaker, do you remember back to the 2003 throne speech? In that speech, Dalton McGuinty promised to restrain spending, but it turned out to be a promise made and a promise broken. Government program spending, after six years, is now up some 65%, when the economy has grown at less than a tenth that rate.

In that very same throne speech, Dalton McGuinty also promised he would—you’ll enjoy this—reduce the reliance on overpaid consultants: a promise made and a promise broken. We all saw hundreds of millions of dollars diverted to Liberal-friendly consultants like the

Courtyard Group, the Premier's former health adviser Karli Farrow and former campaign chair John Ronson through the eHealth, Cancer Care Ontario and now the local health integration networks, or the regional health bureaucracy, scandals.

The failure of the 2003 throne speech to keep promises was followed in kind by the 2005 throne speech in which Dalton McGuinty pledged a red tape reduction strategy: again, a promise made and a promise broken. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business now calculates that red tape is costing Ontario businesses more than \$11 billion per year. This has forced far too many small businesses to close their doors, has killed jobs and has chased entrepreneurs out of our province. The so-called Open for Business initiative has basically shuttered its doors.

In 2005, Dalton McGuinty also promised he would close the coal-fired plants, part of his campaign commitments as well. Initially, he said it would be by 2007. Then it became 2009, and then it became 2014. That takes some kind of work, to break a promise three consecutive times, but sadly, three times a promise made and a promise broken. Let's not forget how the self-righteous Dalton McGuinty once claimed that coal-fired plants contributed to 668 deaths a year, but now has postponed his promise three consecutive times.

This was followed by the 2007 throne speech, where Dalton McGuinty promised he would hire 9,000 more nurses and 70% would be full-time. The pattern continued: a promise made and a promise broken. Just ask the patients, seniors and families in places like Ottawa, London, Fort Erie or Port Colborne, who have seen services like ERs close down and nurses being laid off.

In 2007, Dalton McGuinty also promised to build 35,000 new long-term-care beds: a promise made and a promise broken. Now, with a waiting list of over 26,000 waiting for a space in a long-term-care home, not a single shovel has hit the ground to keep that promise, and hospitals in Ontario are now being forced to cancel surgeries due to overcapacity issues stemming from that bed shortage.

So I stand here and ponder the latest round of promises and wonder to what degree Dalton McGuinty's foreign students promise is actually a cash grab that will freeze more Ontario students out of Ontario's post-secondary institutions.

And I ask how Dalton McGuinty can commit to developing the Ring of Fire when his own Bill 191 already cripples resource and economic development in almost the entirety of the land north of the 51st parallel and after Dalton McGuinty increased taxes on diamond mining in the province of Ontario after the Victor mine opened.

And I wonder what foreign multinational corporation will follow in Samsung's footsteps and make a king's ransom, just like they did on the green energy plan, with the so-called clean water plan. If past behaviour is any indication of future performance, Dalton McGuinty's Ontario is in a lot more trouble than we would think.

I think what is most interesting is what was missing in the speech from the throne. There is no plan to address the deficit or the debt, there is no mention of Dalton McGuinty's next tax grab, and there is no mention of Dalton McGuinty's so-called super-corporation scheme.

First and foremost, there is no serious plan to address the deficit or debt. The McGuinty Liberals steered our province straight into the quicksand, and rather than grab a lifeline out, they have us sinking faster and deeper.

I bet most families don't know this yet, although they certainly will: Dalton McGuinty is on course to double the provincial debt by 2012-13. It took 23 Premiers 136 years to get us \$148 billion in debt, and Dalton McGuinty would single-handedly double that debt in just eight years' time—shameful record.

In the fall economic statement, Finance Minister Dwight Duncan confessed that the deficit was \$24.7 billion—\$24.7 billion. That's actually twice the size of the deficit Bob Rae left this province with, and \$24.7 billion is bigger than the deficits of all the other provinces combined. But guess how much attention the spiralling debt actually received in the throne speech?

Interjection: Three lines.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Three lines. My colleagues have read the throne speech exactly—three lines, 24 words, for a \$24.7-billion deficit.

Mr. John Yakabuski: A billion a word.

Mr. Tim Hudak: My colleague is correct: That's more than \$1 billion per word. Newspaper headlines are longer than that. But I suspect there's good reason for this. Finance Minister Duncan admitted in his fall economic statement that the McGuinty Liberals had no plan to deal with the deficit, and now, seven months later, nothing has changed. They still have no plan and no intention of doing anything about it.

That makes us in the Ontario PC caucus and Ontario families rightly concerned about what new tax hikes and fee increases Dalton McGuinty still has planned for Ontario families. Again, look back to the 2003 throne speech. The McGuinty government failed to mention that they would impose the \$15-billion so-called health tax.

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They outlined in the throne speech their plan for the upcoming session, but it said nothing about their planned health tax that would hurt Ontario families and seniors and didn't even dedicate the money directly to the Ministry of Health. They conveniently left the single largest income tax increase in Ontario's history right out of the throne speech.

In 2005, the McGuinty government conveniently left out the fact that their plan for the city of Toronto included bestowing on David Miller massive new powers to tax. Today, Toronto families are forced to pay more for the privilege of owning a car or trying to buy a home, fees for their garbage and plastic bags and absolutely no mention of that whatsoever in the 2005 throne speech.

Of course, in 2007, the McGuinty Liberals failed to mention what would become the signature tax grab of their second term, the \$3-billion HST tax grab that's

going to kill jobs and take money out of the pockets of seniors and families in order to fuel this government's out-of-control spending.

So I am not surprised that there was nothing on tax increases in this throne speech, but the province is watching, the province is waiting, and Ontario families won't get fooled again.

Of course, there was nothing in the throne speech about the massive super-corporation, mega-corporation, or whatever they're going to call it. It has, no doubt, many Liberal consultants and insiders in an excited lather at the fees they can get out of this deal.

This is clearly a plan for off-book borrowing, plain and simple, all facilitated by the aggressive Wall Street banking firm Goldman Sachs, which was one of the key players in the international financial meltdown of a year or so ago.

I think we can understand why Dalton McGuinty likes this idea. It's going to provide him billions of new dollars to spend today to put a mortgage on our children and grandchildren tomorrow.

But I ask Ontario families: Can you trust Dalton McGuinty to spend this money wisely?

I can see why Liberal-friendly bankers, insiders and consultants are absolutely salivating at this idea. It means that even more Liberal friends are going to get rich at the public trough. The only people who lose when Dalton McGuinty goes on a fire sale of public assets are the everyday Ontario families who will see no benefit whatsoever from Dalton McGuinty mortgaging our provincial assets.

But that's no surprise. It has been a long time since ordinary families have been heard inside this government. The Ontario PC caucus will continue to stand on the side of hard-working Ontario families to oppose Dalton McGuinty's tax and runaway spending policies that have brought our province to the back of the pack.

Instead of big spending programs, the Ontario PC caucus, in their throne speech, would have brought about a plan focused on the most important issue in our province: jobs and the economy and helping working families succeed.

Our caucus has tried, and will continue to try, to get Dalton McGuinty to adopt our ideas to get Ontario's economy back on track and supply good, well-paying jobs for Ontario families today instead of handouts to multinational corporations, to lower the tax rate and red tape regulatory burden to help small businesses succeed and start hiring in Ontario again.

Let me give you some examples, and I hope the finance minister will take them up in his budget. I want to commend my colleague the finance critic from Parry Sound–Muskoka, the member from Thornhill and the member from Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant, who sat on the finance committee and put good ideas on the table that we hope to see in the upcoming budget.

For example, the Ontario PC caucus calls for an immediate payroll tax holiday—a tax that is a disincentive to hire. We want to see small business and business

hiring again, so spend the payroll taxes and let's get jobs moving in the province of Ontario once again.

We want to help Ontario families achieve that Canadian dream of home ownership. Quite frankly, with the manufacturing and auto sectors facing some challenging times, we need construction firing on all cylinders. That's why we're calling for a one-year suspension of the land transfer tax to put that dream of home ownership in the reach of young families and help generate new jobs in construction across our province.

I say to the Minister of Labour: We call on Dalton McGuinty to repeal his job-killing Bill 119, which drives up costs, requiring WSIB coverage for office and secretarial workers. That's going to hurt small businesses because they're taxing people who never set foot on a construction site. If the McGuinty government doesn't repeal that bill, an Ontario PC government will.

Small businesses from Niagara to Ottawa to Kenora are seeing more and more red tape piled on their backs. Ontario farmers are seeing their costs go up while they're competing with unfair subsidized competition from abroad that is driving their prices down. Dalton McGuinty's every cabinet meeting seems to roll out more and more red tape that's killing jobs and chasing entrepreneurs out of our province. That's why the Ontario PC caucus has called for a freeze on all new job-killing regulations and a return of a red tape commission to lower the regulatory burden in the province of Ontario.

Sadly, we're seeing so many young women and men who want to get involved in the trades moving out to Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. They're seeing a system that's not working for them. We need to get our system into the 21st century and out of the 1970s. That's why we'll continue to call for changing the three-to-one journeyman-to-apprentice ratio into a modern one-to-one ratio for the trades to help create jobs in the province of Ontario. We want to see those talented women and men given opportunities to practise their trades and raise their families in the province of Ontario rather than the other nine provinces.

Working with our critic for northern development, mines and forestry, Mr. Hillier, we have brought forward a northern jobs plan that would make it easier to pursue job-creating development projects on crown land in northern Ontario. In return, we would mandate that every dollar raised from that crown land development be reinvested into northern Ontario infrastructure to help create jobs today and create even more jobs in northern Ontario in the future.

We would take an entirely different course when it comes to Ontario's energy supply. We've always known a province of Ontario where reliable, affordable energy was a strength in this province that attracted jobs from around the world to Ontario because they could depend on a reliable, affordable energy supply. Dalton McGuinty's broken promises, based on the interests of special interests, have raised our rates to among the highest in competing states and provinces, closed down mills across northern Ontario, chased manufacturing jobs

out of southern Ontario and laid our economy low. Instead of pursuing pie-in-the-sky energy schemes like the sweetheart Samsung deal, we'd bring forward a plan for affordable, sustainable and emissions-free nuclear capacity in the province of Ontario to help move our province forward.

Lastly, we will continue to call for this Premier to lay off his habit of reckless spending increases and the creation of regional health bureaucracies that are taking dollars out of front-line care and to cap spending for 2010 at what he had projected he would spend in last year's budget. These massive, runaway-spending, running-up-the-debt policies that are mortgaging the future of our children and grandchildren need to stop today.

Our caucus will continue to bring forward good ideas to help stir job creation in the province of Ontario, to help Ontario families move forward, for businesses to grow and to make sure Ontario is restored to its rightful place as the economic powerhouse of this great nation. That's what the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party has always done, and we're the only party calling for a level playing field where everyone gets their fair chance. No more sweetheart handouts to well-placed corporations who hire the best lobbyists; let's give everyone in the province an equal chance to succeed, move up and create jobs in Ontario again.

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The Ontario PC Party is the only party calling for lower taxes and more private sector jobs. We are the only party serious about controlling the spending bloat that is driving up Ontario's debt and challenging our future. The Ontario PC caucus firmly believes that our best days are yet to come. There can be no doubt that even in these extraordinary economic times, we have all of the ingredients to not only just climb out of the recession, but to grow our economy, create jobs and be number one in Canada again.

Ontario has a strong entrepreneurial culture. We have a hard-working, dedicated, talented workforce. We have abundant natural resources, and we are within a day's drive of some 135 million consumers across the border in the US market. These are the forces that made Ontario great, and they will make Ontario great again. But sadly, the Dalton McGuinty government is out of ideas, out of gas and remarkably out of touch with the needs of hard-working Ontario families.

Friends, Ontario's best days still lie ahead. We just need the right decisions to turn our province around. When Dalton McGuinty has failed to provide those promises, to take advantage of the opportunities for our future of growth and job creation, we'll replace him, and the Ontario PC caucus will make Ontario the strongest province in Canada once again.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to have the opportunity to follow our leader in response to the speech from the throne delivered yesterday.

As I listened to the throne speech yesterday, I was making some notes. The first line that I put down was "Second Career"—they mentioned the Second Career program. The second comment that I made, and I think they were about halfway through the speech, was "fluff," because about a third of the speech was essentially fluff. As was noted in the Toronto Star by Thomas Walkom today, Monday's "platitude-laden throne speech was remarkably dull." I would say that you could see that in the faces of the government members watching it: They didn't seem to be too impressed.

Or, as Christina Blizzard noted, "It's Dalton in Wonderland." That was the headline for Christina Blizzard's article today, and I think that summarized the throne speech very well as well. Because we have a situation where we have the largest deficit in the history of the province, at \$24.7 billion. We have a situation where Dalton McGuinty's on track to double the debt of the province by 2012: \$140 billion when he came into power; we're looking at \$290 billion of debt by 2012. And yet, the Premier continues, the government continues with their tax-and-spend program that they've had the last number of years as if it's business as usual: "There's nothing to be concerned about. Everything's going just fine."

Then you see an article today in the Globe and Mail written by Boyd Erman quoting the former governor of the Bank of Canada, and you realize just how out in wonderland the government is, noting that they're talking about the debt and deficit. As our leader pointed out, in the throne speech there were some three lines dedicated to debt and deficit, some 24 words. So we note that Boyd Erman notes that, "That's a poor omen for a province that risks becoming the Greece"—he's comparing Ontario to Greece, and we know what's happening in Greece right now, where they have a huge crisis—"of Canada within a decade or two unless the provincial government can come up with and stick to a credible plan to reduce Ontario's deficit." I'm not going to read the whole article, but I'd like to summarize it a bit. "That's why the province's budget, expected later this month, has to address how to shrink a budget gap that is far larger than any other province's." So compared to the other provinces, as we've been pointing out, we're doing very poorly: "But to deal with what many economists—including former central bank Governor David Dodge—suggest is a significant 'structural' deficit that will persist and grow even when the economy fully rebounds.

"Mr. Dodge told a business audience in Toronto last week that Ontario's spending is outpacing revenue growth so quickly that the result will be a structural deficit equivalent to 3.5% of the province's economic output by 2020, even in good economic times."

There are some alarm bells there that the government seems to be completely oblivious to, because in yesterday's throne speech, they didn't address this situation at all. If anything, they just went on with more of the same: more promises of more spending. They seem completely unable or unwilling to deal with that situation.

We heard more promises in the throne speech. Our leader outlined some of the past promises that this government has made in former throne speeches. Again, I think the number went up, but they talked about jobs. Prior to yesterday's throne speech, they promised a million jobs. I think there were some more that were promised yesterday.

It's easy to promise jobs, but what have they delivered? In the past year, we've lost 140,000 jobs. Before the recession started in October 2008, we lost a couple of hundred thousand manufacturing jobs. The track record of this government is that it's great at saying things, great at promising things in throne speeches, but very poor at actually delivering them.

When you look back at the past PC government, the PC government of Mike Harris delivered one million new jobs. They said they were going to do it and they did it. That's something that the past PC government and Mike Harris can be very proud of. This government has promised a million jobs, and we've seen job losses.

In the throne speech yesterday, they talked about red tape reduction. As our leader pointed out, in the 2008 throne speech they made a commitment to reduce red tape, and what have we seen? They've got this Open for Business policy that's supposed to be reducing red tape, but I'd say to any of the members here: Go and talk to just about any business out there and ask them about how they feel about their burden of red tape, whether it has stayed the same or gotten worse. I know the Certified Management Accountants did a survey of their members; half of them said that it was the same; half said that it's worse. If you listen to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, they say the cost of red tape in Ontario is some \$11 billion. Once again, the government is good at making a commitment, but we haven't seen any evidence that they actually made a difference whatsoever.

The government talks about new possibilities for the economy in their throne speech. They talked about the Ring of Fire and the possibilities for northwestern Ontario, this new chromite discovery. That's certainly something to be very excited about, but then you look at their actual policies, and particularly their energy policies—the Green Energy Act. The one thing that I'm absolutely convinced about, the one thing that we can count on with the Green Energy Act, is higher electricity prices; there's absolutely no question. The government's buy at 80 cents a kilowatt hour and sell at six cents is going to drive the price of electricity up. Or, if you buy wind power at 45 cents and sell at six cents, it's going to drive the price of electricity up.

They claim that they're going to produce 50,000 jobs through that Green Energy Act. I say that there's a very real risk that we're going to lose many, many jobs because of higher electricity prices. When you look at the Ring of Fire and you look at this big chromite discovery, the danger is that with all the value-added enterprises connected with that mine and with this big, new discovery, the ore is going to end up being processed in

Manitoba and in Quebec because they have much more reasonable electricity prices. So the actual policies of this government could be making things much worse. The Green Energy Act has the very real possibility of, despite what the government says about promising jobs, actually costing us many jobs in mining, forestry and manufacturing.

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You see other things announced in the throne speech. They're talking about encouraging more foreign students and about 20,000 new spaces. That, it seems to me, is just another initiative of the government to try to get some cash coming in because they're totally unprepared or unwilling to change their ways of just spending more money and coming up with new programs. They're absolutely unwilling to make the tough decisions to try to control their spending. They're looking at foreign students as the cash cow to try to get more money into colleges and universities, and meanwhile colleges have seen a 15% increase in their applications. So where are the spaces? Where are the spaces going to be for those Ontario residents?

We look at some of the promises they made in the throne speech. I think their exact words were "the great recession." If you look at the analysis of the recession we're in, done by the Fraser Institute, they say that this recession—that hopefully we're over—is more correctly about the same as one we had in 1957-58, which was based on a contraction of credit markets. They concluded that while there was a severe recession, it ranked third in overall terms of gross domestic product decline, fifth in terms of length and third in terms of the unemployment rate.

This government is trying to make things seem worse than they really are. They're trying to just keep going with their big spending ways, and you just absolutely cannot believe the promises they make in a throne speech.

You look at their past record, and it's an awful record. They promised 35,000—which throne speech was that? I think it was in the 2007 throne speech they promised 35,000 long-term-care beds. I think there may be one or two that have been built now, but there are certainly not 35,000. It's very clear that commitment was not kept. When you look back to the past PC government, we actually built 20,000 new long-term-care beds and we rebuilt 16,000 long-term-care beds. There seems to be a real difference here.

The past PC government would make a commitment and they'd actually do it. You can go through the list of commitments this government has made—how many times have they committed to shutting down coal-fired generation? I think it was in the 2003 election. It was in the 2005 throne speech. They were going to close down coal-fired generation in 2007, then it was going to be 2009. Now it's 2014, and they still don't have a concrete plan.

They made a commitment to reduce the use of consultants. I think that was in the 2003 throne speech, and

yet post that commitment we see up to \$1 billion with very little show for it, most of it going to untendered contracts to consultants in the eHealth scandal.

They've said one thing in their throne speeches. You can go through—there's a long, long list of unfulfilled commitments in those throne speeches, and this one I think is no different, these phantom promises that they have made.

In this throne speech they're talking about reducing the government civil service by 5%. What have they actually done? They've increased the public sector at eight times the rate of the private sector—eight times the rate. We've seen a huge increase. They already had announced this, I believe, in last year's budget, but now they're talking about reducing the civil service by 5%. It just isn't believable.

In 2003 they talked about restraining spending. My goodness, that one they've really blown out the door because the budget—for those people unfamiliar—was \$68 billion that we were spending in 2003. This year, they're planning on \$119 billion in spending, over a 65% increase in spending.

What they've said in the past throne speeches and what they're doing now just really makes you question the credibility of this government.

In wrapping up and letting the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke take over, who I'm sure will have much more to add to this speech, their past record is so bad that we just can't believe anything they commit to in this year's throne speech.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I appreciate not only the enthusiasm that members of the PC caucus have for supporting me in my efforts to speak, but also the enthusiasm from the folks on the other side. And I've got tell you, they're showing a lot more enthusiasm to hear me than they were for the Premier's throne speech yesterday. We know the Lieutenant Governor delivers the throne speech, but it's the Premier who writes the words, just like he writes the words for all of those questions when those backbenchers get up to say, "This is of the greatest public importance and it has to be asked today." The Premier's office writes all of those words, too. So I really do appreciate it. It's very nice of them to show that kind of cordial welcome towards me.

I want to say that I really do appreciate the comments of our leader, Tim Hudak. You know, Tim has been travelling around this province and actually listening to Ontarians, actually listening to find out what they see, what their problems are and what their concerns are, while the Premier is living in a bubble; he's living in a bubble. It's a kind of virtual bubble, like that virtual college he's going to create of 20,000 online students, this virtual university that he was talking about in his throne speech.

But I've got to tell you, in my time in this chamber, I have never seen at the end of a throne speech—and I've

seen the throne speech in 2003, one in 2005 and one in 2007. After every one of those throne speeches, there was still some lightness in the step of the members of the Liberal caucus as they left this chamber. They actually looked like they believed what the Premier was saying. They actually looked like they were kind of excited and thought, "Do you know what? We really think we're on to something here, and the Premier's going to deliver a plan that is going to help Ontario." After yesterday's throne speech, I saw that caucus walk out of here, heads—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I just remind members that there is one person speaking. That's the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: One second. I apologize, everybody, but I just came from a police officer's funeral, and I know we had another police officer who was murdered yesterday, and I noticed out front that we don't even have the flags at half-mast. I'm wondering if it's a policy that we don't do that anymore or if it has been overlooked, but I'd like to see the flags put at half-mast.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. That's not a point of order. Thank you very much.

The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's good to see our member from Simcoe North back. We appreciate his attendance at that police officer's funeral today, and we thank each and every police officer for the sacrifices they make and the willingness to put themselves in harm's way every day to protect us in this great province.

But back to the throne speech, and what is this Premier doing to protect us in this great province? What he's doing is telling a fairytale. One of the headlines today was, "It's Dalton in Wonderland." They suggested that all the Premier had to do was put on a top hat and he could have been Johnny Depp. Well, sadly, that's the kind of comical way that people are depicting the Premier when he comes out with a vacuous, empty, worthless throne speech like he tabled yesterday.

Ontarians were looking for something more. Ontarians were looking for a way out of, yes, one of the deepest and worst recessions we've seen in a long, long time. They're looking for answers; they're looking for a vision; they're looking for a plan. What did they get but this empty document that was an excuse to rearrange the deck chairs on the Titanic over there? They did a seat sale yesterday. It's like Air Canada: It was a seat sale. They moved some of the ones out of regular class and they moved them into first class, so they're going to get better meals now or something, or maybe they can get cocktails for free in the new seating plan. But that was not what Ontarians were looking for. They weren't looking to see the chairs rearranged over the weekend—prorogation, so move the chairs. No, they actually wanted some real answers and some real plans with meat on the bone for what Ontario is going to face over the next couple of years. As our leader said, a billion a word, 24 words, a

\$24.7-billion deficit. That's what we had in that throne speech to address the deficit and the debt in this province.
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These guys live in dreamland. They think they can just keep spending and that's going to make everybody happy. It's sort of like the guy who's got four or five kids and just wants to keep making them happy, and the allowance keeps rolling and rolling. Dad doesn't tell them at some point that he has lost his job in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, but at some point they end up going bankrupt. He never wanted to tell the kids how tough things were because the kids were happy when he was giving them the money. That's what these guys are like. They figure that everybody's going to be happy if they just keep flowing it out, paying it out, don't worry about the debt, don't worry about the deficit, but my children, my grandchildren, your children, your grandchildren are going to have to pay for that. There is going to be a day when you've got to face the music and pay the piper, and they don't seem to be willing to deal with the reality.

Like the Premier said yesterday, "We don't want to move too fast to deal with the deficit." I'll tell you how fast they moved to create this deficit. As my friend from Parry Sound–Muskoka said, in 2003 spending in this province was \$68 billion. It took 130-some years since Confederation to get there, and in just six short years we've gone from \$68 billion to \$119 billion. A constituent was asking me the other day, "But I guess they need the money, right?" And I said to him, "Well, spending has gone up. Since I've been an MPP, which coincides with the election of Dalton McGuinty's government, spending has gone up from \$68 billion to \$119 billion—over 60%." I said, "Do you know anybody, on an annual basis, who has seen those kinds of increases in their personal budget unless they won Lotto Max?" Well, I'll tell you, he hasn't won Lotto Max, but he spend like he's won Lotto Max. It is a serious misjudgement about his responsibility as a Premier and this government's responsibility to people in this province.

I want to read a couple of things. Don't take my word for it; I'm partisan, although I very seldom deliver a partisan speech in here. But I am a member of the PC caucus and I believe in our goals and principles, and I believe I have a responsibility to point out when we believe that this government is on the wrong track. We used to be on the right track.

Let me tell you what Boyd Erman says. Governor David Dodge—this is the governor of the Bank of Canada. He's not the guy who drives a Dodge; this is the David Dodge.

Interjection: Former governor.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Former governor, I know. "Mr. Dodge told a business audience in Toronto last week that Ontario's spending is outpacing revenue growth so quickly that the result will be a structural deficit equivalent to 3.5% of the province's economic output by 2020, even in good economic times...."

He goes on to say "Provincial deficits like Ontario's are likely to be 'very much more difficult' to eradicate

than the federal budget gap, Mr. Dodge opined in a recent talk in Toronto, because provinces are the front line for soaring health care spending. Solutions are likely to require higher taxes and user fees."

Moody's said in a recent report dealing with Ontario, "At 4.4%"—talking about their deficit—"of gross domestic product, the province's forecast deficit in the current fiscal year is far wider than any other province's."

"One-time asset sales such as any attempt to sell a chunk of provincial crown corporations aren't enough...."

"'We're not looking for one-time measures that would provide a one-time infusion of cash that couldn't be sustained over time,' said Alex Bellefleur, a Moody's analyst who covers provinces. Also, 'We don't want rosy expectations of what economic growth will be and provinces saying that'"—future—"revenue growth will solve their fiscal problems, because we don't believe it will."

That's a very important line because that is something that this Premier has hung on to since he got elected, and he's been very, very fortunate in that revenues in this province supported what he did.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Of course. That was due to the fact that you had a government before that actually made this economy work again, put people to work and created wealth.

But he depended on that revenue growth, and you know what happens to somebody when the revenue growth slows? A reasonable person will also adjust their spending. A reasonable person will sense that—you know what?—there's less coming in, there has to be less going out. Otherwise we've got a problem. But the problem with this government is they wanted to be—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You see, they spent so much time and so much of our money making friends with this union or this special interest group or this multinational corporation and Samsung, that they couldn't bring themselves to actually be responsible when it came to spending your money. You see, they just see it come in. They don't earn it. It's the people out there who earn it. They just take it for granted and spend it, and that's what's absolutely wrong about this government.

You know what I didn't see in this throne speech either? We see them going on and on about this commitment to green energy and the Green Energy Act in this province. Never once have they even thought for a second or even been willing to talk about or address the issue of cost. They want to talk about building new industries in this province, like the Ring of Fire and the chromite deposits, but you know what? If you're going to be in the smelting business and the mining business and the processing business and everything else, you need energy. What you want to do is drive the price of energy so high that those people who need that energy in order to create those jobs and in order to create that wealth are not going to be able to afford it in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario.

Did they talk about nuclear? Not a single word about nuclear in this budget. We've got 3,000 megawatts of nuclear that are going to be shut down at Pickering in 2020. They're going to do some tinkering to try to keep those units operating until then.

By 2020, we will also have had to face the reality of refurbishing four units at Darlington to begin that refurbishment and also the six remaining units at Bruce Power that were built in the 1980s, which need to be refurbished themselves. So while you're taking six units at Pickering out of service and having 10 more needing refurbishment, not a word has been said and not a thing has been done about building new nuclear to replace them.

You want to talk about another promise: The other day I heard the energy minister saying, "We're getting close to making a decision on new-build nuclear." I thought that we made a decision on new-build nuclear in 2006 when Dwight Duncan jumped up and, to a great deal of fanfare, told the world that Ontario was back in the nuclear business, and we would be building new nukes. We were signalling to the world, "Don't worry. We will be able to guarantee you a reliable supply of affordable baseload power." That was the right decision. It is four years later, and not a thing has been done.

Do you know how you have jeopardized the economy of this province by doing nothing on that front? If you look at the OPG report last year, nuclear power, the regulated asset was about 5.8 cents per kilowatt hour. But they want to tell us that we're actually going to make our economy stronger and better by filling it with power at 16 cents, 19 cents, 40 cents, 80 cents.

1630

That's not the way—we all accept that there's a place for those kinds of renewable energy projects, but I'll tell you, as my leader pointed out to me, one thing that is not renewable in this province is the credibility of a Premier. This Premier is running low; the tank is just about on empty. Yet he comes out yesterday with this document that tries to convince the people—you know, if you were sitting here and you had not been a member of this House, if you just came here as a visitor yesterday, you would have sat here and thought, "Oh, my God, this is Wonderland." Johnny Depp might as well have been here, because if you were listening to that speech, you would really believe, quite frankly, "This Ontario place is quite interesting. They must be one of those few places that have those huge budget surpluses. They must be running about a \$12-billion surplus because, my God, this throne speech is just about the happiest—it's great. They must have an unemployment rate of about 2.5%. Everything must be just running along tickety-boo."

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: He's an illusionist.

Mr. John Yakabuski: He's an illusionist. We may as well have had David Copperfield here with Johnny Depp, because the Premier is doing everything he can to create the illusion that things are well here in Ontario.

All he wants to do is to get by until 2011. If they can keep that shell game going and buy themselves—that's

all it's about right now. It is not about what you need as a working family. It is not about what you need as a student. It is not about what you need as a patient in a hospital or someone waiting for a long-term-care bed. You know what it's about? It's about, "How do we fool the people? How do we keep the wool over their eyes until October 2011? If we can just keep the shell game going a little bit longer, we're going to fool them again, and we're going to get ourselves another four years." That is what is happening in this House with that throne speech yesterday. That's what the plan is: Let's just get by. "Let's move all of these wonderful, grandiose dreams to page 5 or something, so nobody is going to really expect anything from us on this water plan and this water technology." Somehow they think that Ontario is going to be the only place in the world that's going to have the kind of brainpower and the skill sets and technical people to produce some of these products that will be necessary, and we're going to have a monopoly on them; we're going to be the only ones. It's all going to be Ontario. It's dreamland. It's dreaming in Technicolor. But they want to move everything just far enough away that people aren't expecting it tomorrow.

It's like, you know, that classic story, not always true, where the woman was always hoping that her man would propose to her, and he always kept saying, "We're getting closer. I just need to have these things in order." "I just need to line up my ducks a little better here." "I'm going to get my education first." "I'm just going to pay for my car first"—always making that promise: "Oh, we're going to get married, sweetheart. Don't break up with me. We're going to get married. We're going to get married." He just keeps putting that promise off a little further and further down the road.

Mr. Peter Kormos: But has the relationship been consummated?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, I can't get into the technical details on that, I say to my friend from Welland, but I will tell you this: The people of Ontario are tired of Dalton McGuinty's promises. They see that time and time again—and my leader, Tim Hudak, and my friend from Parry Sound–Muskoka have been through it. I could go through the list ad infinitum. We could re-emphasize which promises were broken and which promises have not been kept. But suffice to say that what has happened over and over again on the key commitments of this government, key commitments that they have made to the people of Ontario, is they have not followed through.

My friend from Simcoe–Grey brought up a good one today in question period. The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities just sloughed it off and dismissed it, but they made an ironclad commitment to students that they would have a \$300 book credit for them: an ironclad commitment. Nobody in the province got \$300, and only those with OSAP got a portion of that at \$150. But did we see a story in the paper that said, "Dalton McGuinty broke his word again"? No. No. Do you know what we see in the paper? "Dalton McGuinty Is Promising You a Better Tomorrow."

The people have had it. The people are tired of those promises. It is time for Dalton McGuinty to stand up and act like a Premier. If he can't, step aside, and we'll bring a Premier in who can.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Paul Miller: I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Gravelle has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1636.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
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Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Murray, Glen R (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres
		Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
		Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
		Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
		Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	
Vacant	Leeds–Grenville	
Vacant	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	

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Jerry J. Ouellette, David Ramsay
Liz Sandals, Peter Shurman
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
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Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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