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**Monday 11 April 2011**

**Lundi 11 avril 2011**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services  
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building  
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
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Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation  
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement  
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430  
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 11 April 2011

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 11 avril 2011

*The House met at 1030.*

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

*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I would like to welcome to the Ontario Legislature today Mr. Amarjit Singh Sahi. He is a member of the Legislative Assembly of Punjab, India, and represents the riding of Dasuya.

I also would like to welcome Dr. Sarbjit Singh Dhillon as well. He runs a very successful dental practice with his wife, Supinder Dhillon, in Brampton. Also accompanying them is Charanjit Dhami of New Malwa Express Transport. They are here to watch question period, and I want to wish them all the best. Enjoy question period.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to welcome a long-time friend of mine, a retired General Motors manager as well as a constituent of Christine Elliott: George Mech. Welcome to Queen's Park, George, for the day.

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I'd like to ask all members to help me in welcoming the family of page Riley McPhail, who are coming into the visitors' gallery: his mother, Lynn McPhail; his father, Jim McPhail; and his sister, and perhaps a page of the future, Maddie.

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** I'd like to welcome to the House today Derek Neal, who is an assistant professor of history at Nipissing University in North Bay. We're delighted to have him here for a tour and for lunch. Welcome, Derek.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm very pleased to introduce today the family of my page, Leighton Zink, from the riding of Kitchener-Waterloo. His mother, father, brothers and sister are here, as well as his uncle and cousins. We extend a very, very warm welcome. He's doing a great job.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### MINISTERS' EXPENSES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Premier. Last week, Premier, you and your ministers dodged about 50 questions around the three quarters of a million dollars

paid to Ron Sapsford. Mr. Sapsford was your deputy minister who resigned in the wake of the eHealth scandal. Premier, you yourself dodged every question asked of you, but today's question is harder to dodge because it's about you.

On September 14, 2009, you said that you and your cabinet ministers would post your expenses online by April 1, 2010. A full year has now passed. Premier, can you explain to Ontario families why you have failed to comply with your own legislation?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm pleased to take the question. I want to begin by reminding my honourable colleague and television viewers that my friends opposite stand adamantly opposed to this provision. They voted against this particular provision. They have no interest whatsoever in making those expenses public.

I think it's important that we understand our moral footing as we presume to put these kinds of questions. I look forward to more supplementaries.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I guess that counts as another dodge, beginning this week the same way. Premier, you dodged every question last week about your secret sweetheart deal with Ron Sapsford.

Premier, you yourself said that all expenses for ministers, including yourself, would be posted by April 1, 2010. It is now April 11, 2011. You have not posted a single expense as Premier of this province in over a year. You said you would do this; you have failed to do so. The Premier of the province is breaking his own legislation.

Premier, it's not a hard question. Why did you fail to post your own expenses online? What exactly are you trying to hide?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** The fact is, any expenses that I have had, I have in fact posted, and I recommend that my honourable colleague look.

I find it a little bit interesting that this is yet another practice that we have put into place—whether it's expanding the freedom-of-information ambit, whether it's giving more power to the auditor to look into our transfer agencies, like our colleges and universities and hospitals and the like, they oppose those kinds of things. Yet they put questions to us because they're somehow concerned that we're not living up to standards that they themselves oppose.

Again, I want to assure my colleague that we are in fact abiding by all the standards that we've put in place.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, with all due respect, you're not. You are failing to abide by your own legislation. The Premier just said—I thought I heard him say that he himself has posted all of his expenses. Well, Premier, in 2009 you jetted to India, to Israel and China in 2010 and to Washington, DC earlier this year, but your own site fails to post a single airline ticket, a single hotel or any other expense.

Premier, unless you've suddenly learned how to fly, I have to ask you why the Premier of the province is not complying with his own legislation. This is not a tricky question, Premier. Why have you failed to post your own expenses for more than a year?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Again, I recommend to my honourable colleague that he take a look at all the postings that emanate from my office. He's going to find everything there in very clear detail.

I'd also recommend to my colleague that he take this opportunity to declare for the first time his support for the new kinds of accountability provisions that we have put in place. I'd like him to say that he supports the expansion of the FOI provisions that we put in place, that he supports the new authorities that we've given to the auditor and that he supports the kinds of posted expenses that we now require, which apply to government and which apply to their offices as well. I would ask him to embrace the provisions that we have in fact put in place.

#### MINISTERS' EXPENSES

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Sadly, the Premier seems to be flip-flopping and changing his very own story in the House. Premier, a couple of minutes ago you said that you posted all of your expenses online. Now you've flip-flopped in a subsequent question and said "all of the things that emanate from my office." That's meaningless and dodging the question.

Here is exactly what you said. Here's your quote: "We're going to shine a light on" all "expenses so Ontarians will know who exactly is spending what exactly"—who exactly is spending what exactly. But now you're putting the curtain over your own expenses.

Premier, won't you come clean? Why have you as Premier failed to comply with your very own legislation?  
1040

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** In the interest of transparency, I would urge my honourable colleague to tell us a little bit more about a particular individual who is seeking the nomination on behalf of his party. His name is Kevin Gaudet, and in particular, he said this about labour relations: "We need a Wisconsin up here.... The problem is similar."

When we look at what's happening in Wisconsin today, we see chaos, we see confusion, we see dissent, we see animosity and we see a failure of two sides to come together, work together and serve the greater public interest. I would encourage my honourable colleague to take the time here now to tell us a little bit about the statement and whether his party in fact endorses the statement, "We need a Wisconsin up here" in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** What an utterly bizarre response from the Premier of our province. Premier, you didn't even come close to answering the question about your own legislation.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Minister of Finance, please come to order.

Please continue.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It's almost like you're not even trying anymore. Premier, just answer this basic question. You have failed to post a single expense for more than a year now. You seem to be trying to hide those expenses somewhere.

It's not only you, Premier, but it's your ministers as well; your current Minister of Research and Innovation, for example, who happened to win a Teddy waste award as mayor of Winnipeg. In his next job as chair of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, he expensed 128 flights over three years, but he has not posted a single expense.

Premier, is the minister simply following your example? Why aren't you complying with your own legislation?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I will give my honourable colleague an example, but I look forward to hearing about his intention to create a Wisconsin here in Ontario, Canada.

For example, there is an expense report detail provided by Tracey Sobers; she works in the office of the Premier. The purpose of this filing was the Council of the Federation: paid airfare for Premier McGuinty and Mrs. McGuinty; the dates are provided; the destination is provided; the airfare is provided; accommodation is there; travel incidentals are zero, by the way; hospitality is zero. This is, in fact, the way we've been addressing this for a long time. It's all there in black and white. I'd encourage my honourable colleague to take a good look at it.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, you said that all your expenses would be posted by April 1, 2010. You have absolutely failed to post any under your name.

Your Minister of Research and Innovation, despite his reputation for jet-setting around the world on the taxpayer's back, has not posted a single expense. Similarly, your Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, your Minister of Tourism and your Minister of Citizenship and Immigration have not posted a single expense for more than a year, breaking the law that you claimed was going to make a difference in the province.

There's a word, Premier, for when you say one thing and do the opposite, which I can't use here in the House, but people know what that's all about. They're tired of a government that says one thing and does the opposite. Why do you and your ministers break your own legislation about posting your expenses for Ontario families to see?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm looking through my notes here, and I recall a distinct reference to something about a fishing licence and can't seem to find that here. But maybe in a moment it will come back to me, and maybe it will trigger a particular memory to my honourable colleague.

We have put in place a number of new rules. I am proud to say that we are following those rules scrupulously. They must be approved by an independent third party; that was not the case back then. Each and every one of our expenses has, in fact, been approved, or they're not posted and individuals must pay for those. So I'm very confident of that.

Where there is a lack of confidence, where there is uncertainty that has been introduced into Ontario politics today, is a new determination on the part of that party, apparently, to make of Ontario a Wisconsin. We think it is a very unfortunate—

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

#### HYDRO RATES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. With each passing day, it becomes clearer that this government's energy policy is in complete chaos and that costs are spiralling out of control. On Friday, the OEB once again increased rates for 17 electricity utilities. This government has already added 8% to home heating bills, 8% to filling up at the gas pumps and now yet another round of hydro increases.

Ontarians want to know one thing and one thing only: When is this nickel-and-dime going to stop?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Energy.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think something else that Ontario families deserve to know is, where do you stand on all these issues? You stand here and you chirp about increases that may be going forward to local distribution companies, knowing full well that they're independent of this government, knowing full well that they need to make investments in their infrastructure to ensure that our distribution system is strong and knowing full well that they invest in conservation programs.

When you speak to environmentalists, you say you stand for all that, but when you speak here in this House, Mr. Speaker, what that leader of the third party says is she doesn't support those investments. I think Ontario families deserve to know: Where did the NDP lose their way, and where is it that you really stand on these issues?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Ontarians tell me that they are feeling like they're being nickel-and-dimed to death, people like Alice St. Aubin of Dryden, Ontario. She writes this: "My hydro bill has gone from 30% to 40% higher with HST and also the time-of-use rate.

"When does hydro expect us to cook in our home? I no longer use a dishwasher. I got rid of my deep freeze, changed the light bulbs to high-efficiency etc.

"Still, my hydro bills keep getting higher."

What does the Premier have to say to people like Ms. St. Aubin?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I guess the leader of the third party wasn't here when we introduced our clean energy benefit. Our clean energy benefit is taking 10% off the bills of every Ontario family, farmer and small business. It's saving Ontario families about \$150 a year; small businesses, on average, about \$1,700; farmers about \$2,000, on average, a year. We're working very hard with Ontario families to ensure that we are helping them through the investments that we need to make.

But I guess what the NDP are saying is that they don't support the investments we are making to move out of dirty coal to cleaner sources of power, to create thousands of clean energy jobs and to help farmers with opportunities in our microFIT program; they're making up to \$10,000 a year on these programs. Why do you not support farmers? Why do you not support jobs in—

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The fact of the matter is, people are struggling to pay the bills, people like Louise Tancredi of Kapuskasing. She writes: "Imagine my surprise when my hydro bill almost doubled from the same time last year.

"Last December, my bill was \$210. It's usually about \$100. I attributed this extra cost to Christmas, but the same thing happened in January.

"Something is very wrong here."

Premier, jobs are scarce. Gas at the pumps is going through the roof. What is this government going to do for people like Louise Tancredi who struggle day in and day out to keep their heads above water?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I think it's time for the leader of the third party to come clean with that constituent and the rest of Ontario families. They're all over the map on their energy policy. They don't support the important investments we're making to build a clean energy economy. Let me give you an example of that: A New Democratic vice-president said, with the alleged backing of the leader and her critic, that he fully supports a moratorium on renewable energy development.

When you speak to environmentalists, you say you support our investments in clean energy, but then you get up on your feet today and you blatantly oppose these important investments that are moving us out of dirty coal, that are building a cleaner and healthier future for our kids and grandkids. You've got to either support the investments or not, but Ontario families deserve to know where you stand.

1050

#### TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Premier. Ontarians can't afford to pay another penny—people like Marilyn Markham of Windsor, Ontario, for example. She writes this: "I have been on a fixed income due to many physical problems.

“With the higher prices, I am worried I may lose my house, not because of mortgage payments but due to the HST, gas prices, utilities etc.

“It is a crying shame that has me completely stressed.”

When will this Premier finally start listening to everyday Ontarians like Marilyn Markham and start providing some real relief?

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I’ve got a strong team, and I’m proud of it.

I’m pleased to take the question. My honourable colleague and I in fact share the same kinds of concerns when it comes to ensuring that all Ontarians, especially those who find themselves in the lower income bracket, have the supports they need to support their own families and find success and opportunity here in Ontario. That’s why we invest so heavily, for example, in our schools, our health care and environmental protection.

But I also want to remind my honourable colleague what her own colleague the MPP for Beaches–East York recently said. He said, “The tax burden has gone down on everyone, in spite of what people think. You know, taxes have gone down, literally in all income groups.” He’s right. I’d recommend that understanding to my honourable colleague, the leader of the NDP.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** People just don’t understand how this government can shovel out \$6 billion in tax breaks to Ontario’s largest corporations and yet not give ordinary Ontarians a break on their hydro bills—Ontarians like Tom Fickling of London. He writes this: “With the recent recession and my job loss in the automotive sector in 2008 I am now earning just over half the income I was earning prior to the recession.

“And the price of fuel, energy and interest rate increases are all cutting deeper into an already significantly reduced income.”

When will this Premier finally start listening to Ontarians like Tom Fickling and do something to give them a break?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the concern raised again by my honourable colleague and the individual for whom she’s raising it. I want to remind you, Speaker, and all members of the House that more job numbers came in on Friday. The economy in Ontario keeps growing. Jobs keep coming back in Ontario. We’ve now recovered 93% of the jobs that we lost during the recession. Again, that stands in good comparison to the US, where they’ve recovered 17%, and the UK, where they’ve recovered, I think, close to 43% now.

My honourable colleague mentioned in passing something about the auto sector. Again, we were there for our auto sector where some 300,000 or 400,000 jobs hung in the balance. We were not going to cut those families loose, so we came to the table with several billion dollars. Again, I am pleased to report that as part of a growing economy, that sector in and of itself is also growing stronger. Production is up. All the workers who were laid off have been recalled. In fact, we’ve heard of some

expansions and new investment. The fact of the matter is, we are going in the right direction.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** People just cannot take it any more—people like Jeanne Marleau from Barrie. She writes: “We are a retired couple and living on a fixed income. The rise in food, clothing, heat and hydro has put a strain on our finances.

“My husband and I worked for 80 years collectively, raising a family, and feel it is unfair to impose such an outrageous tax.

“We have also voted Liberal all of our lives, but come this provincial election, it is very doubtful.”

When will this Premier finally start listening to people like the Marleaus and finally start giving Ontarians a much-needed break?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** We will not adopt the approach taken by the NDP in Nova Scotia, where they increased the HST by 2%. That’s not the direction that we are pursuing.

When it comes to energy, as my honourable colleague will recollect—and it would be nice to have her public acknowledgment of this—she was recommending to us that we reduce the cost of electricity by 8%. We said that was insufficient. We’ve reduced it by 10%. We’ve taken it two points further.

I’ll remind my honourable colleague as well that when it comes to income taxes, the average Ontario family is receiving a \$355 income tax cut this year and every year going forward. That’s on top of our energy and property tax credits of up to \$900 for families and over \$1,000 for seniors. Then there’s our permanent sales tax credit: \$260 for low- and middle-income Ontarians. That’s going to benefit over a million Ontarians.

## EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is to the Minister of Health. For the first time since you created them in 2006, every one of your local health integration networks is part of the million-dollar club. The 2010 sunshine list shows that you paid over \$1 million for executive salaries at each of the 14 LHINs. The Ontario PC caucus supports hard-working front-line health care workers who do a great job in spite of your diverting money to pay bureaucrats who don’t see a single patient or perform a single surgery.

Minister, why do you believe health care dollars are better spent on bloated salaries of your LHIN executives instead of on front-line patient care?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I’m very happy to have this opportunity. The member opposite knows that when we created the LHINs, we actually eliminated two layers of bureaucracy and, in combination, we’re spending no more money on LHINs than was spent under the previous plan with the two layers of bureaucracy.

What we’ve added is a local voice to health care decisions. The planning that the LHINs are responsible for is

making a real difference for the front-line care that is so important both to the member opposite and myself.

Let me quote Dr. Willie Keon, a recently retired Conservative senator, world-renowned heart surgeon, and now chair of the Champlain LHIN. He says, "My love for health care transcends my political persuasions. I have"—

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Here are the facts: Since 2006, executive salaries at the Champlain LHIN and South West LHIN bloated from approximately \$350,000 a year to over \$1 million. Executive salaries ballooned from half a million to over one million dollars at LHINs in Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant, the Central, Central East and Central West regions, Erie St. Clair, Mississauga Halton, and the North West, South East and Waterloo Wellington LHINs. At the North East and North Simcoe Muskoka LHINs, executive salaries went from under a half-million dollars to almost \$2 million. Toronto Central LHIN went from wasting \$600,000 on executive bloat to a staggering \$2.3 million last year.

Minister, can't you see that the money that you divert to bloated salaries is better spent on front-line health care?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** What the member opposite knows but does not want to say is that LHINs actually spend 0.25% of the money they receive on their own planning; 99.75% of the money goes to that front-line care. In addition, it brings a local voice. The party opposite wants to shut down the local voice when it comes to health care decisions. They want to bring all that decision-making power back to Queen's Park.

I don't think the people in Thunder Bay want decisions affecting their care to be made in Toronto. I don't think the people in Windsor want the decisions affecting their local care to be made in Toronto. I think the people in Sudbury or Sarnia or Ottawa or Kingston or any of those places across this great and magnificent province want to make the decisions as close—

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

#### FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** My question is to the Premier. Buried in the government's massive budget bill are major changes to the Education Act which will allow for-profit child care operators to run the before- and after-school component of full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. This was never part of Charles Pascal's vision for full-day learning and was not part of the minister's statements.

Why is the McGuinty government sneaking through this change which will undermine the quality and affordability of the before- and after-school program?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I was hoping that my honourable colleague would tell us how it is that he would have us make common cause so we can ensure that the

Conservative Party of Ontario does not put a death nail in full-day kindergarten in the province of Ontario. I was hoping that he was going to speak to that issue.

I can say that we are very much looking forward to moving ahead with full-day kindergarten. By 2014, it's going to benefit all 247,000 four- and five-year-olds in our province. It is one of the most important things that we have done with respect to ensuring that we are building the most highly skilled and educated workforce, I would argue, in decades. It puts us at the forefront in all of North America, and I look forward to speaking in a little bit more detail to the specifics of my honourable colleague's question in the supplementary.

**1100**

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Premier, it's one thing to allow not-for-profit community agencies to continue to provide already-established before- and after-school programs; it's quite another to open our schools to private daycare companies whose main goal is to minimize costs and maximize profits.

Child care experts at the Atkinson Foundation say that the government is completely remiss and that for-profit delivery will provide neither quality learning nor child care. You are undermining early learning programs.

Are you so ashamed of abandoning Pascal's recommendations that you had to make these changes to the Education Act in such a cowardly way?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think we've been talking about these kinds of changes for a long time and I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak to them once again.

We have introduced what I think is the appropriate, responsible and, indeed, respectful flexibility that is warranted in this kind of initiative. We have talked to the school boards, the parents, our educators, including our early childhood educators, and we've introduced appropriate flexibility into the program.

We are ensuring that when it comes to our before- and after-school programs, they will ensure that more families have access to an integrated, high-quality before- and after-school program at the schools. They're going to have to follow the Ontario curriculum model that we put in place, and they're going to have to coordinate with the teaching and early childhood education that takes place. I'm proud to once again be at the forefront—

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

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** This question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. In the March 29 provincial budget, the Minister of Finance reported that Ontario has had five consecutive quarters of growth, higher business investment and a resurgent manufacturing sector, all evidence that the global economic downturn is behind us.

Ontario has recovered 93% of the jobs lost during the recession, and three quarters of those jobs are full-time

jobs. In Mississauga and across the 905 region, it's clear that Ontario is turning the corner.

The province has set an objective to create and retain 10,000 jobs. Minister, how will Ontario support the creation and retention of these jobs?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I'm delighted to have this question from the member from Mississauga—Streetsville, who has been a huge supporter of the Ontario government's move to work with business to create jobs here in Ontario. We've had a very good several weeks ever since this budget was tabled in this House and we'll be curious to see how the opposition members continue to support, or not, the initiatives of this government when it means real jobs for people.

Last week, we saw the announcement at Best Theratronics: 100 new jobs in Ottawa, specifically for developing and manufacturing medical equipment used to treat cancer, and blood-making supplies. Protenergy Natural Foods in Richmond Hill: 60 new jobs announced last week manufacturing best packaging for these products, including soups, broths and sauces, in environmentally friendly packaging.

These kinds of initiatives—

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

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Minister, in Mississauga, we can see that business earnings are up, volumes are growing, firms are hiring and people are getting back to work.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Members will please come to order.

Please continue.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Pratt and Whitney Canada, a world leader in the design, manufacture and service of gas turbine engines for the aerospace industry, has just announced an investment of \$139.2 million in new technology, equipment and R&D. That investment creates 80 new jobs in Mississauga. Concept Plastics, Canada's only car mat manufacturer, invested \$7.18 million to support the installation of new equipment.

Minister, what else is Ontario doing to attract businesses and provide an incentive to set up shop right here in Ontario?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** I hope that people at home will realize that the budget that was tabled in this House just a couple of weeks ago is doing all that it can to attract business here in Ontario, and it's working. We're talking about one initiative that sees the Ontario government partner \$175 million to leverage \$1.3 billion of investment in this province and creating thousands of jobs, not just for people who need employment but for—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just remind the honourable member of a soccer analogy that he sent me a little note on last week, about cards.

Minister?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello:** Thank you—and inviting businesses from around the world; showing them our tax policies and watching their eyes open with wonder at

how aggressive and competitive tax policy is right here in this province for making investments for business.

We're about creating jobs, and we marvel that the parties opposite have opposed every measure that we have created that is bringing real jobs to Ontarians today. We'll watch with interest to see what happens as our budget progresses, as we show—

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

#### MINISTER'S EXPENSES

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** My question is to the Minister of Innovation. Last October, you were in Quebec City at the same time you became embroiled in a controversy over messages you posted on Twitter about our leader. But when you got back, you didn't post your flight or hotel for that trip. Did you just walk it off?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** No. This is a ministry that has contributed to growing 2,800 jobs, leading to one of the four largest clean tech companies. I travel on a very limited basis, and our ministry has met and exceeded every budget target it's been given by the government.

Finally, all—

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** How about that deputy mayor of Ottawa joining us?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Member from Peterborough, please come to order.

Please continue.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** All of my expenses have been submitted to the Integrity Commissioner. We've kept it up on an ongoing basis, and we're very proud of that. If the member ever wants to write me or request that directly, I'm quite happy to help her out with that.

I'm also really impressed by the opposition research—half-competent. I was chair of an agency, which the honourable Leader of the Opposition—I had one of the lowest per capita travel expenses ever. I travelled economy and I had a green footprint a fraction of what any other—

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

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** When he stops talking, I'll start again.

The minister hasn't posted a single expense since last April. The minister, of course, has a rich history of running up expenses and having Ontario families and others pay the bill.

The Premier's announcement in September 2009 was before you came to this place, so I'm going to go through it again. The Premier at that time said, "From now on, expenses will be posted so families can know who exactly spent what exactly."

Why haven't you posted your expenses? Share with us.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** These folks are amazingly entertaining. All of my expenses have been sent through to the integrity process and are going through the process. They may not have noticed that I'm the newest member of cabinet. I'm quite happy any time—but let's

look at our friends over there. How was Las Vegas? Viva Las Vegas. While Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Tim Hudak spent your tax dollars on a conference in Las Vegas with a vice-presidential candidate, Dick Cheney; Tourism Minister Tim Hudak also went on a province-wide junket in the summer of 2001 and with his staff racked up over \$23,000 of expenses.

I have to admit, they have a lot to learn about managing expenses. Again, they don't like to compare my record to any of the Tory appointments in Ottawa. They're silent on that. They rack up expenses like—

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. I remind the honourable minister that when the Speaker stands, the member is expected to sit.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Member from Nepean.

New question. The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

#### INJURED WORKERS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Labour. Statistics show that quite simply the WSIB's former labour market re-entry program did not produce the intended results of making the worker re-employable. The former labour market re-entry program was audited in 2004. The audit found that a shamefully low 44% of completed programs resulted in the worker being re-employed.

Why has the WSIB implemented its new worker re-integration program, that appears destined to achieve the same dismal results as the former program?

1110

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I appreciate the question from across the way. The WSIB provides unfunded liability insurance or, I should say, insurance for employers and protection for workers. When it comes to the reintegration program, it's important that we do everything in our power to ensure that those employees who are injured on the job enable themselves to get back to work.

In the end, we want workers and employers to succeed in this system. We will continue to support those workers as they become injured.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** The WSIB arranged submissions on the worker reintegration program three months after it was implemented, leading to great difficulty correcting program faults. The Ontario Network of Injured Workers Groups is concerned that there are many fatal flaws within the new worker reintegration program. For example, injured workers must be given the best available chance to return to paid employment, and a quality education is one of the steps necessary in achieving this goal. Why is this minister allowing the WSIB and its new worker re-

integration program to retrain injured workers to only a grade 9 level?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** As the member across the way knows, we are now doing a review through the Harry Arthurs report to try to determine what best we can do support those workers. We are going to make changes and we want to achieve results to benefit those workers. We want to enable them to get back to work as soon as possible and as safely as possible.

I appreciate the question. We'll work together to try to find resolutions to help those employees.

#### WORKPLACE SAFETY

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I've got a question also for the Minister of Labour. Minister, Bill 160, the Occupational Health and Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, is currently before the Standing Committee on Social Policy. Bill 160 is a culmination of the final recommendations made by Tony Dean and the expert advisory panel. These recommendations were the result of deliberations and consensus amongst panel members. They included labour reps, employer reps, as well as academics.

To the minister: Can you please tell this House how Bill 160 could change the landscape of health and safety in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Thank you to the member from Oakville. I am pleased that we are moving forward with the changes to our health and safety system that will benefit Ontario workers and help ensure safety in our workplace. This proposed legislation, Bill 160, is about laying the foundation and building the framework to a new and more effective occupational health and safety system in Ontario.

If passed, the bill will enable our government to appoint a new chief prevention officer to coordinate and align the prevention system. It will also create a new prevention council with representatives from labour, employers and safety experts to advise the chief prevention officer and the minister. The bill would put in place the right framework to allow us to further implement the panel's other recommendations.

Bill 160 proposes the most significant changes to the prevention system in over 30 years. That will result in safer workplaces in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you to the minister for that update.

Minister, the expert advisory panel made a number of, I think, very progressive recommendations, some of which the ministry is already actively implementing. As an update to the House, Minister, can you please tell this House the status of those recommendations and those that are currently being implemented?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** The member is absolutely right: We are working on implementing other key recommendations made by the panel. We are improving the way we deal with workplace reprisals by broadening the approach to enforcement and to facilitating compliance, including

making resource materials available about where employers can go to fix safety hazards.

In February, I spoke in this House about the newly appointed interim prevention council. I continue to work closely with that council. We're consulting and taking into consideration the expert advice from this diverse group of individuals and health and safety professionals as we continue to enhance safe and healthy workplaces. I'm committed, as we all are, to ensuring that we put in place the right framework within which we can continue to implement the vision of the expert advisory panel.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture. The agriculture budget this year is down \$52.6 million from what was budgeted last year.

If you don't need legislation to implement a business risk management program, and clearly you don't, since it's not in the budget bill; if you don't need federal support, and you clearly don't, because you finally proceeded without it; and if you don't need more money because you cut the agriculture budget this year, can you explain to the agricultural organizations that worked so hard to develop the risk management program why you let farmers suffer so long before you implemented it?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I'm very pleased to rise and talk about the good work of the coalition and the good work of our Ontario farmers. We have been working with our farmers for years to develop programs that work for them. These are programs developed by farmers for farmers, and what they do is they start to address the concerns raised from the farms that the current suite of programs by the federal government don't work for our farmers. Why don't they work? They don't give the predictability, the stability and the bankability that our farmers need today.

When we think about the work that has been done by our farmers to develop business risk programs, this piece is critical in enhancing—

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

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Minister, you know that our caucus has been supporting a business risk management program for years and working with the farmers to promote it. While you were dragging your heels, meanwhile, there were—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Stop the clock. Members will please come to order. Your minister wants to hear the question. Minister of Consumer Services, Minister of Finance, Minister of Community Safety.

Please continue.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Minister, while farmers were relying on food banks to feed their families, and young beginning farmers were being forced out of business, that's what you were doing—waiting. Even your former parliamentary assistant asked here in the Legislature two weeks ago why you couldn't have done this sooner.

Minister, will you apologize to the farmers for once again waiting until an election year to give them the support they deserve all the time?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** I'm very pleased to rise to this. When we think about what our farmers need in order to ensure that they stay on the land, I put our record up against the members from across the way, who cut the ag budget, shut down the offices and turned their backs on farmers while they left the land.

Let's look at this side of the House. What have we done? We've brought forward risk management programs across the non-supply-managed sector, which they voted against.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The member from Oxford, you just asked the question. The member from Nepean—the honourable member understands the standing orders, and that any time a member is not satisfied with an answer, they can file a late show.

Minister?

**Hon. Carol Mitchell:** We look at the commitment in the budget to our farmers, and that is unprecedented. We have not seen this transformation in 25 years. For the members to vote against the farmers on programs that they've worked hard for—

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

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is to the Premier. Last week, Ontarians learned about yet another family struggling to get a loved one home after falling ill on vacation. Mr. Horace Moore is stuck in Florida in a hospital because there are no ICU beds available in Toronto or Mississauga. For a month, Mr. Moore and his family have been stuck out of country, paying thousands of dollars in living expenses and putting their lives on hold. They are desperate to get their father home.

Can the Premier tell this family when this will finally happen? When will they finally be able to bring their father home?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Health.

1120

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thanks for the question. This clearly is an issue that is of concern to all of us. I think all of us who have parents who spend time out of the country during the winter months or family members out of the country are concerned when we hear stories about this.

What I want to say is this: It's very, very important that, when people leave Ontario, they purchase health insurance. It's very important. It's also important that people understand that it's the responsibility of the insurance company to find a place in Ontario to receive the person who has fallen ill out of the country.

We're working with the insurance industry so they understand how the system works, but it is the responsibility of the insurance company.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This minister's response is a disgrace. This family has insurance, and all of the examples we have used are of families that have insurance.

Sadly, the Moore family is not the only family that's been put through an ordeal like this, and the minister should know it. We've heard from many families who dared to go public and many more who felt they couldn't go public because they thought it might jeopardize their opportunity to actually get a bed.

The Premier would rather blame the families. His minister would rather blame the families, asserting that, perhaps, they were doing something wrong when they've been doing everything right, instead of looking at the actions and the failings of their own government to solve this problem.

When will the Premier actually do something to prevent families from being subject to this kind of abuse?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I very much object to the characterization expressed by the member opposite. I think it's really unfair to all the people who work in our health care system.

I want to make it very clear: The referrals to hospitals are done by the insurance companies. There is capacity in our system, and it is the responsibility of the insurance companies to work with hospitals in Ontario to get patients transferred.

As I said in the first question, we are working with the insurance industry so they understand how the system works, so they can better serve Ontario residents who need to come home.

## HEALTH CARE

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** My question is also for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, we all know the McGuinty government is committed to ensuring that Ontarians are able to receive high-quality health care in a timely manner and as close to home as possible.

There have been multiple examples of this government moving forward with initiatives that speak to this commitment. Last week, regulations were passed which will improve services that are provided by optometrists and will decrease wait times for Ontarians. In Strathroy, my own optometrist has spoken to me about the need for these changes.

Minister, could you tell Ontarians more about these new regulations and what additional services they can expect the next time they meet with their own optometrist?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'd like to thank the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex for the question. For members from all sides of the House who have raised this issue with me, I am very pleased that Ontario's optometrists are now going to be able to help treat Ontarians by prescribing certain medications. It's a very big step forward for the profession of optometry, and it's great news for Ontarians.

Optometrists will be able to prescribe medications to treat minor eye ailments and, in certain cases, glaucoma.

This will have significant benefits for the people of Ontario. It means they will spend less time going to medical appointments because their optometrist can take care of the problem in a single visit. It means better access to eye care closer to home, particularly in rural Ontario, where few ophthalmologists practise. It also means our ophthalmologists will spend less time taking appointments simply to write prescriptions and have more time to treat more serious eye ailments. It's—

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

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** This is not the only significant expansion of medical services announced by the McGuinty government in the past week. Last Friday, Premier McGuinty announced the expansion of the scope of care and responsibilities for our talented nurse practitioners. Nurse practitioners are vital to rural health care and have been a welcome addition to the hospitals and the communities that they work in.

Minister, can you tell the House more about the new responsibilities that nurse practitioners will have in our health care system?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Again, thank you for the question. I'm very happy to have the opportunity to talk more about Ontario's nurse practitioners and the new responsibilities they will be able to take on in our hospitals.

Ontario's nurse practitioners are leaders in their field. This change will make Ontario the first province to allow them to admit and discharge hospital patients. It will help speed up the discharging of patients and get them home to their families sooner. It will also take some demands off physicians and our hospitals.

Over the last few years, we have greatly expanded the role of nurse practitioners in Ontario, with the announcement of 25 new nurse practitioner-led clinics across the province. Both of these expansions greatly benefit Ontarians. I'm very, very proud of the progress we've been able to make when it comes to nurse practitioners.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, you continue to put the rental housing stock in jeopardy by not fixing your own legislation that, through the Residential Tenancies Act, requires that residential landlords provide to prospective tenants information regarding the electricity consumption of the rental unit for the 12-month period before they enter the proposed tenancy.

Toronto has the most rental housing units in the province, and yet Toronto Hydro is not complying with regulation 389/10, detailing that they shall provide this requested information to landlords. Your Catch-22 means that landlords are breaking the law by not providing this information. They can't get it. Will you fix this oversight today?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I just want to say how proud I am of our legislation. It's legislation that's balanced. It's legislation that's fair. It's legislation that understands that landlords have rights but tenants have rights as well. It

isn't biased legislation. It isn't ignoring the needs of one group. Our legislation, unlike their legislation, has balance to it. That's what we're about. That what the people of Ontario want. They want balance in legislation, not legislation that's skewed, not legislation that doesn't represent one side. They want legislation that's balanced, that's strong, that represents the rights of both sides and understands the rights of both sides. Our legislation is like that, unlike their legislation when they were in power.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Joyce Savoline:** It's clear that the left hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing.

You know that there is an oversight in the suite-metering legislation. Your ministry met with small business landlords on February 17, and nothing has been done. Landlords are being told they must provide the information; hydro providers are not complying because they don't want to breach privacy policies. You continue to gamble with Ontario's rental housing stock by dismissing the serious problems that these landlords are facing.

Will you do what you should have done immediately after the February 17 meeting and fix this problem?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** What is abundantly clear in our legislation is that there is an understanding that, in any entity, there is a left hand and there is a right hand, unlike their legislation, which only understood the point of view of one side. Our legislation isn't like that. We make no apologies for that. We understand that both parties have to ensure—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just ask the honourable members to please come to order.

Please continue.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** I think that I can truly say that I speak for the people of Ontario, who want balance in legislation. They want strength in legislation. They want understanding in legislation. They want to ensure that both sides are heard in legislation. Unlike that side that had skewed legislation when they were in power, our legislation is balanced, and the people of Ontario are proud of that.

#### FOREST INDUSTRY

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** My question is for the Premier. The Premier will have received dozens of letters from the people of Sioux Lookout protesting against the McGuinty government's decision to take away the crown wood supply of the Hudson sawmill, effectively shutting the sawmill and permanently destroying 600 good jobs.

My question: How does the McGuinty government justify killing 600 good jobs in a sawmill that has operated for over 30 years and is the largest employer in the Sioux Lookout area?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry.

1130

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I appreciate the question. Certainly one thing that needs to be said is that the wood

supply competition—we've had over 1,000 jobs that have been created or retained as a result of this, and 19 offers have been accepted all across the north.

But that is not to say that we are not very sensitive to the challenges faced by those communities which were not successful in terms of this process, which has been done in an absolutely transparent and fair way under the guidance of a Fairness Commissioner.

I do want to say, related to McKenzie Forest Products, that we had an opportunity for them to meet with our senior ministry officials this past Friday. I understand that it was a challenging meeting but also a productive meeting, and we want to continue to work with the community. The important thing to perhaps note too is that it's important that this is done in a fair and balanced way and that there's no influence by a minister in terms of making a decision, because I'll tell you, if I had my way, I'd probably award wood to everybody who asked for it, which would not be an acceptable way to do things.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I heard a lot of words, but I definitely didn't hear an answer.

The decision makes no sense. This is a mill that was operating within the last year. You're denying it a wood supply while you're providing other mills that haven't operated in two or three years a wood supply. I say again, this decision makes no sense to anyone.

But the minister mentions the community, so I want to ask the minister this: Rather than take away the wood supply, why don't you award the wood supply to the town of Sioux Lookout and allow them to look for an operator that may be more financially viable? Why are you so determined to take away the wood supply, destroy the largest employer in the community and kill 600 jobs?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** When we began the wood supply process a year or so ago, we basically made available about nine million, almost 10 million, cubic metres of wood. Generally speaking, this was crown fibre that was not being harvested. We wanted to be able to get that wood back to work, and I appreciate that the McKenzie mill was open for a period of time, but substantially it had been closed over the last three years.

The long and the short is, we had 115 applications go forward and a wood supply process that has indeed seen 1,000 jobs created or retained. We've got 19 accepted offers.

Last week, I had the great pleasure of awarding 100,000-plus cubic metres to two First Nations in the Beardmore and Nipigon area, creating 20 jobs to build a pellet plant—a wonderful new opportunity.

So I'm very sensitive to the situation, certainly in terms of the impact on Sioux Lookout. I say to the member: He knows that. That's why we're working so closely with the community. We're doing the very best we can to continue to work in a positive way with the community.

#### FAMILY LAW

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** My question is for the Attorney General. I'm sure all members have heard, as I have, dif-

difficult stories from constituents involved in Family Court. We are keenly aware that the system can be difficult to navigate, particularly when going through emotional, life-changing events like divorce or child custody disputes. People in these circumstances often put the highest concern on the well-being of their children and want to know how they can get access to reliable information early in the process so that they can make the best possible decisions for their families during a difficult time.

I know, over the past year, the government has begun offering an information service to families at certain courthouses in the greater Toronto area. Can the Attorney General tell us and the families we represent what our government is doing to make sure that families in my riding of Ottawa Centre and across Ontario have access to the information they need in order to make informed decisions in family law matters?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The member for Ottawa Centre raises a very important issue, and he has brought these concerns to my attention in the past. That's why we have launched a four-pillar reform of the family law system.

It all begins with knowledge. You know, information—knowledge—really is power, and people who aren't lawyers or judges need additional information in an easy-to-understand form about what they're going to face when they enter the family law system. It can be very intimidating at a very emotional and difficult period of time.

The first pillar of the reform is a mandatory information system: Make sure that everybody who's going to enter the family law system knows what they're facing; what community supports might be available; what additional supports there are, in terms of legal advice and mediation; and what effect this might have on their children. It's all about making sure people are prepared for the justice system they're about to face.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Many people feel that the justice system can be overly costly and confrontational, particularly when dealing with family disputes. The process is also seen to be overly complicated and inaccessible to people. For some, it may be the only time in their lives when they encounter the justice system, and they are doing so at a time when they may have a lot at stake and tensions are high.

I know that throughout Ontario, many communities have counselling or support services that are available to help families when going through these difficult times.

Can the Attorney General tell us what the government is doing to ensure families know where to turn in their communities for support? How can we make our family justice system less confrontational to the benefit of thousands of families in difficult circumstances?

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** The member is right: When families are facing a family law crisis, it's a deeply emotional time—very difficult decision. Part of the reforms are to take the emotion out of the fight, take the emotion out of the issues. In addition to the mandatory

information program, we're providing additional opportunities to mediate or facilitate the resolution of issues without the full court fight. We're providing additional opportunities to have legal advice early on in the process, either through the legal aid plan or through one-stop shops we're setting up in six different locations. This has already come into force in all of our unified sites April 1; it will be in every site by the end of summer. It's good for families, good for the system of justice.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for question period has ended. There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1136 to 1300.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### JOHN ARNOLD TORY

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Quiet, humble, gentle, modest: This is how John A. Tory, one of Canada's most distinguished business leaders, has been remembered since he passed away on April 2 in Florida with his family at his side.

John A. Tory guided and advised some of Canada's largest companies, including the Thomson family empire expansion into a powerful multinational company and Rogers Communications into a communications empire. As well, he co-founded a leading Canadian law firm with his father and brother.

Throughout his remarkable career in law and business, he remained a man of integrity and an extraordinarily gentle person who put others ahead of himself. He and his wife, Liz, set an example when it came to giving back to their community by generously supporting such causes as the AGO, CAMH and Sunnybrook Hospital.

However, his greatest joy in life was his family: his wife, Liz, of 58 years; his four children, including John, who served with us here in this Legislature as leader of the official opposition; his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

On behalf of everyone in this Legislature, I extend my sincere and deepest condolences to his family. This extraordinary man who led an exemplary life leaves an outstanding legacy. May the foundation of his advice on any subject—a set of values rooted in excellence, integrity and humanity—be an example for us all to follow.

### HOCKEY

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Each year, young people in East York play for the Stanley Cup at the Stan Wadlow arena. They've been doing that for 55 years. The teams that they play for all are named after familiar teams that we would all know, NHL teams: Toronto Maple Leafs, Montreal Canadiens, Detroit Red Wings and the like. The jerseys that they wear are absolutely similar. The young people play with all of their heart.

On Saturday, April 2, the games began first thing in the morning. The highlight, of course, of every season is playing for the little Stanley Cup. When you look at this, it is an exact replica, although a little bit smaller than the original Stanley Cup; it's in sterling silver. The authority to have the cup was granted by Clarence Campbell who was then, at that time in 1954-55, president of the NHL.

This year, the final match was Toronto Maple Leafs versus Detroit Red Wings—a very hard-fought game, but it was eventually won by Toronto. The team hoisted the cup as it skated around the rink. Perhaps, just maybe, this is the harbinger of things to come for the more senior team who hasn't had that kind of luck for 44 years. The kids in East York had a wonderful day.

My congratulations to the coaches, the parents, the referees and everyone who makes this happen year after year. It truly is a highlight of our community.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Today, I wish to acknowledge the outstanding work done by our government and my colleague the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I had the great pleasure of welcoming Minister Mitchell to Peterborough riding on Tuesday, April 5, to meet with local farmers to discuss our risk management program announced in our budget of March 29.

This year's budget should have been titled the Farm Budget, because there has not been as important an agricultural program developed in Ontario for 30 years. The announcement of a permanent risk management program is good news for Ontario's farmers and farm families.

Farmers can now count on stable financial support when prices for their products fluctuate due to unpredictable factors such as weather and global market changes, one more example of our government helping farmers through difficult times.

This budget supports the hard work on the part of Ontario's farmers: programs by farmers, for farmers.

I want to recognize Edgar Cornish and his colleagues in the Peterborough County Cattlemen's Association who developed this model. Ontario's farm organization leaders deserve to be congratulated for a job well done. They have all worked exceptionally hard.

#### SAMUEL HOLLAND

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I rise to correct, for the record, a statement I made during debate on Dutch Heritage Month on Thursday, March 24, 2011. During my remarks, I stated that the Holland Marsh was named after Major Samuel Johannes Holland. That is correct.

I went on to say, based on incorrect information, that he was not Dutch. That is not correct, and I want to thank Mr. Albert van der Heide, publisher of the Windmill Herald, for bringing this to my attention and for ensuring that the record is clarified.

Mr. van der Heide pointed out that Samuel Holland was in fact born in 1728 in the eastern part of the Nether-

lands, in the province of Overijssel, where Mr. van der Heide spent his early years before coming to Canada in 1964.

In 1745, Samuel Holland joined the Dutch artillery and then left his native country for Britain, where he became a major in the British Army and a military surveyor and cartographer. The consistent excellence of his engineering skills led to Holland's appointment as Canada's first surveyor general. Holland did the earliest survey of the land that was to be named for him, the Holland Marsh. The area he put on the map would, more than 140 years later, be settled and developed by people from his country and would become the vegetable basket of Ontario, contributing about \$1 billion to the provincial economy annually.

I trust that this correction serves to reconnect Samuel Holland to his Dutch roots, as Mr. van der Heide requested

#### RENEWABLE ENERGY

**Mr. Kuldip Kular:** It's a great pleasure to share with my colleagues the news that a leading manufacturer in my riding has become the single largest commercial purchaser of renewable energy in Canada.

On Wednesday of last week, I was joined by Ontario's Minister of the Environment; John Coyne and Godfrey Lee of Unilever; and Tom Heintzman of Bullfrog Power to announce the green energy partnership between these two companies.

Impressively, this commitment to renewable energy will reduce Unilever Canada's carbon dioxide emissions by 7,554 tonnes a year. This is roughly equivalent to removing 1,500 cars from the road.

I want to express my thanks to Unilever for seeing an opportunity to make a difference in Ontario and for leading by example. I'm certain that other companies in Bramalea-Gore-Malton will be encouraged by this news and will find ways to reduce their own carbon footprints.

Importantly, this announcement is a sign that Ontario's green energy sector is growing and that we, as a society, are becoming a sustainable one. We are closer than ever to closing the last of our coal-powered generating plants.

I would also like to thank the Premier and the Minister of the Environment for their leadership in making Ontario a healthier, greener place to live, work and raise our families.

#### GEORGE MECH

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm delighted today to recognize my former colleague and very good friend George Mech. George and I worked at General Motors for over 30 years, and I know him to have given and made a very dedicated contribution through many years of service.

George retired 42 years ago, and now he's devoting his time and talents to building his community, as is evidenced by his volunteer work. George dedicated himself

to the local Kiwanis Club, where he was appointed chair of the Young Children: Priority One program. He worked tirelessly to improve services for children both locally and abroad.

Some time ago, George was instrumental in organizing breakfast programs for students at four Durham region schools. Not content to stop there, he began organizing the Builders Club at the same schools. Their successful projects have ranged from reducing vandalism to improving youth literacy. One Builders Club project of which he could be particularly proud is the no-touch program, which has gone a long way to eliminating bullying in our schools.

For his many contributions to children in his community, the Kiwanis Foundation of Canada recently presented George with the prestigious Mel Osborne Fellowship award for devotion and distinguished service to community.

I'd invite members to recognize George, who is visiting here in the gallery, to give him some credit for the work he has done and to say hello to his wife, Doris, who could not visit us today. Welcome, George. Thank you.

1310

#### PARKINSON'S DISEASE

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Today marks World Parkinson Day, an important day during Parkinson's Awareness Month.

As you are aware, Speaker, Parkinson's touches me within my family. My brother Norm has Parkinson's disease, and I have watched and supported him in his battle for years, along with his loving and caring wife, Debbie, and their children, Josh and Hannah. With the rest of his five brothers and sister, we watch and support.

Strikingly, approximately 40,000 Ontarians like my brother are living with Parkinson's. Today and throughout the month of April, dedicated volunteers are working in communities across the province to raise awareness and funds to help people with this debilitating disease and their families.

What I have come to learn is that we need to understand neurological conditions like Parkinson's better, and we need to ensure that people living with neurological conditions have the support they need to live their full lives and maintain their independence and their quality of life.

Last week, Parkinson Society volunteers sent every member a pot of tulips to remind us that Ontarians with Parkinson's are calling for a provincial brain strategy to address their needs and those of more than two million Ontarians living with neurological conditions. I encourage all of my colleagues to support this call to action. Far too many people live with this condition and know that we have not done enough yet. I commit to them that I shall continue to work to see that day when we have that strategy in place.

#### ROBOTICS COMPETITION

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** On Saturday, April 2, I joined our most promising young scientists, programmers and

inventors at the FIRST robotics competition held at Mississauga's Hershey Centre. This annual North America-wide competition gives high school students the opportunity to explore technology and make it do something practical. Teams of students have a problem to solve and have to do it by making a robot and teaching computer logic to the robot to accomplish the task. Students learn and apply world-class skills.

Ontario has committed \$3 million over five years to support FIRST Robotics Canada. As a physics grad, a weekend programmer and a bit of a science guy myself, I admire the enthusiasm, the ingenuity and the innovation of our future scientists, engineers and computer programmers. They solved the FIRST robotics problem with ingenuity, and they overcame the limitations of time, knowledge and resources, just as they will need to do in real science today.

Congratulations especially to students from our western Mississauga schools: Rick Hansen senior secondary, West Credit secondary and St. Joan of Arc secondary schools.

Executive director Mark Breadner and his team worked hard to organize an impressive event that opens young minds to the excitement of science.

#### MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I wish to speak to the residents of Ottawa-Orléans, the whole city of Ottawa and the province and let them know how far this government has come with uploading the services downloaded by the Harris-Hudak government in the 1990s. The historical support—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I remind the honourable member of the reference to previous governments.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I withdraw.

The historical support provided to municipalities since 2003 is found on page 131 of the budget. The uploading was negotiated with municipalities by then-Minister Watson and has a significant impact on a municipality's capacity to balance services delivery within reasonable municipal tax increases.

For Ottawa and Orléans, the total uploading is about 7% of the provincial total uploaded since 2003, a full \$2 billion. That is \$140 million for Ottawa. One per cent of the tax bill in Ottawa is about \$10 million. This uploading means that the tax bills for city residents are 14% lower than they would be without the uploading, and the uploading of services continues. When looking at the higher energy costs, this action by the province must be considered by residents. Another \$1 billion is planned to be uploaded by the province and off the municipal tax bills by 2018.

Our budget is focused on providing excellent education and health care, environmental protection and economic development. It provides the right balance as Ontario moves forward after the devastating recession.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON JUSTICE POLICY

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Justice Policy and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Lisa Freedman):** Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 140, An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2011, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 140, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement, abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la réforme du logement social et apportant des modifications corrélatives et autres à d'autres lois.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

## PETITIONS

### HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I have a petition to the members of the Legislature of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms states that everyone has freedom of conscience and religion, freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; freedom of peaceful assembly; and freedom of association;

"Whereas concerns have been raised from a broad spectrum of citizens and political parties about the conduct of the Ontario Human Rights Commission and tribunal;

"Whereas Canadian courts have never said that human rights codes are necessary; and

"Whereas there are other commissions, laws and codes that already exist to address genuine violations of human rights;

"Therefore we call upon the Legislature of Ontario to stand up for our freedoms by repealing the Ontario Human Rights Code and permanently disbanding the Ontario Human Rights Commission and tribunal."

### OAK RIDGES MORaine

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present one of thousands of petitions from my riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

"Whereas citizens are concerned that contaminants in materials used as fill for pits and quarries may endanger water quality and the natural environment of the Oak Ridges moraine; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment has a responsibility and a duty to protect the Oak Ridges moraine"—as we all do; "and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has the lead responsibility to provide the tools to lower-tier government to plan, protect and enforce clear, effective policies governing the application and permit process for the placement of fill in abandoned pits and quarries; and

"Whereas this process requires clarification regarding rules respecting what materials may be used to rehabilitate or fill abandoned pits and quarries;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the Minister of the Environment initiate a moratorium on the clean fill application and permit process on the Oak Ridges moraine until there are clear rules; and we further ask that the provincial government take all necessary actions to prevent contamination of the Oak Ridges moraine," especially on Lakeridge Road or Morgans Road in my riding of Durham.

I'm pleased to sign this and present it to Jia Jia, one of the pages.

## TAXATION

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Just to get this clearly on the record, I have another petition here that reads:

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty is increasing taxes yet again with his new 13% combined sales tax, at a time when families and businesses can least afford it;

"Whereas, by 2010, Dalton McGuinty's new tax will increase the cost of goods and services that families and businesses buy every day. A few examples include: coffee, newspapers and magazines; gas for the car, home heating oil and electricity; haircuts, dry cleaning and personal grooming and personal care; home renovations and home services; veterinary care and pet care; legal services, the sale of resale homes, and funeral arrangements;" and the list goes on.

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised he wouldn't raise taxes in the 2003 election. However, in 2004, he brought in the health tax"—or the premium—"which costs upwards of \$600 to \$900 per individual. And now he is back at it raising taxes again;

"Therefore 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 on Ontario's hard-working families and businesses," and pay attention to the economy.

I'm pleased to sign it, support it and give it to Gemma, one of the pages on her last week here at Queen's Park.

## REPLACEMENT WORKERS

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** This petition is to the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lockout; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

**1320**

“Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout.”

#### IDENTITY THEFT

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I have received a petition from Consumer Federation Canada, and it is very dear to my heart. It's addressed to the Parliament of Ontario and the Minister of Government Services.

“Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America;

“Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

“Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

“Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one's good credit rating;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in the Ontario Legislature ... be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

“(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated (masked-out) form, protecting our vital private information such as SIN and loan account numbers.

“(2) Should a consumer reporting agency discover that there has been an unlawful disclosure of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the affected consumer.

“(3) The consumer reporting agency shall only report credit inquiry records resulting from actual applications for credit or increase of credit, except in a report given to the consumer.

“(4) The consumer reporting agency shall investigate disputed information within 30 days and correct, supplement or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed, incomplete or inaccurate.”

Mr. Speaker, since I agree, I'm delighted to send you this information and this petition.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** This is another series of petitions from my riding of Durham which reads as follows:

“Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values;

“Whereas the Green Energy Act”—Bill 150—“allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:”

“That the Minister of the Environment” and Minister of Energy “revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent, epidemiological study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines” in my riding of Durham.

I'm pleased to sign it and support it and send it with one of the pages here at Queen's Park.

#### FIREARMS CONTROL

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I have another petition that speaks directly to the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, Bill 56. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the growing number of unlawful firearms in motor vehicles is threatening innocent citizens and our police officers;

“Whereas police officers, military personnel and lawfully licensed persons are the only people allowed to possess firearms; and

“Whereas a growing number of unlawful firearms are transported, smuggled and being found in motor vehicles; and

“Whereas impounding motor vehicles and suspending driver's licences of persons possessing unlawful firearms would aid the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

“We, the undersigned citizens, strongly request and petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of crimes involving unlawful firearms in our communities.”

Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to sign this petition, because I agree with it, and send it to you with Emma.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition signed by a great number of constituents in Oxford and other ridings around it. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas multiple industrial wind farm projects are being considered by the government of Ontario in the absence of independent, scientific studies on the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to put a moratorium on any renewable energy approvals for the construction of

industrial wind farms in the province of Ontario until such time as it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms have been fully studied and addressed.”

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition on their behalf.

#### WIND TURBINES

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I have another petition to the Legislature of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas multiple industrial wind farm projects are being considered by the government of Ontario in the absence of independent, scientific studies on the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to put a moratorium on any renewable energy approvals for the construction of industrial wind farms in the province of Ontario until such time as it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms have been fully studied and addressed.”

#### EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Mr. Speaker, I have one more petition for you. It’s called “Fairness for Ontario Workers: Employment Insurance,” and it’s addressed to the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the federal government’s employment insurance surplus now stands at \$54 billion,” and rising; and

“Whereas over 60% of Ontario’s unemployed are not eligible for employment insurance because of Ottawa’s unfair eligibility rules; and

“Whereas an Ontario worker has to work more weeks to qualify and receives fewer weeks of benefits than other Canadian unemployed workers; and

“Whereas the average Ontario unemployed worker gets \$4,000 less in EI benefits than unemployed workers in other provinces and thus not qualifying for many retraining programs;

“We, the undersigned,” petition the Parliament of Ontario “to press the federal government to reform the employment insurance program and to end the discrimination and unfairness towards Ontario’s unemployed workers.”

I agree with this and am delighted to sign this petition.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I always like to have fresh petitions, so this one—I’m digging it out here.

“Whereas gasoline prices have increased at alarming rates during the past while; and

“Whereas the gasoline prices are higher” in some areas compared with others, causing hardship for working families; and

“Whereas the high gasoline prices adversely affect the economy of the province and result in increasing job losses;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“(1) That the McGuinty government immediately freeze gasoline prices until world oil prices moderate; and

“(2) That the McGuinty government immediately reduce the” HST “on gasoline until world oil prices moderate; and

“(3) That the McGuinty government immediately initiate a royal commission to investigate the predatory gas prices charged by oil companies operating in Ontario.”

I am pleased to present this on behalf of my constituents to Kiruthika, one of the legislative pages here.

#### ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care; and

“Whereas Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1-billion eHealth scandal; and

“Whereas now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty’s cuts will:

“—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends;

“—increase wait times and lineups for patients;

“—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery; and

“—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the McGuinty government stop its cuts to pharmacies.”

1330

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

BETTER TOMORROW  
FOR ONTARIO ACT  
(BUDGET MEASURES), 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR DES LENDEMAINS  
MEILLEURS POUR L’ONTARIO  
(MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 7, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 173, An Act

respecting 2011 Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters / Projet de loi 173, Loi concernant les mesures budgétaires de 2011, l'affectation anticipée de crédits et d'autres questions.

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

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I will be sharing my time with the member for Toronto Centre.

I'm very pleased, actually, to be able to stand up and speak to Bill 173, which is our budget bill. For myself, it was certainly a very important day, and I think for many of my constituents it was as well.

We talked about a number of things in the bill, including maintaining the progress that we've made in health care and the progress we've made in education, and we talked about the importance of eliminating the deficit without impacting those areas. We talked about a number of new things that we're doing in terms of health care, such as the breast cancer screening exams and the extension of those. But for myself, first as a member of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, the mental health announcement for a strategy for children and youth was very important to me, and it made a great difference to hear that we were going to be moving forward with that.

Another thing that I certainly found very exciting is—I don't know if I'd say "semi-retired farmer"; I'm not quite sure what the classification is these days, when your son is doing the actual farming but you're still heavily involved in the operation and the finances of that farm. But I was certainly very pleased when we started to talk about the extension of the business risk management program, and certainly the implementation of a risk management program for farmers in the livestock area as well, the non-supplied areas. Those were important announcements, and for myself, like I said, very exciting.

As a farmer who is in the supply-managed sector, I was very pleased for the non-supply-managed farmers. I have been working with the agricultural community not just as a farmer—but also having worked with the farm organizations and worked as a representative of one of those farm organizations for many years, I have known of the need for something that would secure for the farmers in the non-supply-managed sector the kinds of security that supply management enjoys.

It was particularly important because we had a coalition of all farm organizations and commodity groups that pushed for this. OASC came to the minister, came to us and came to all members of Parliament, quite frankly, and asked them to make the program not only extended to the livestock producers but to also make it a permanent program for grains and oilseeds.

I had the opportunity to be at the very beginning of that particular process, where the farmers themselves started to create the program. They were the ones who came forward. They did the work. I can well remember some of the meetings that were held in my riding among farmers in the grains and oilseeds sector, who had at that point gone through a number of years of very low prices. It had become increasingly difficult for them to go to the

bank, to secure operating loans so that they could continue to do their business. It had become difficult for them to do a business plan, because they couldn't predict what their prices were going to be, and of course, there's the whole issue of stability for these producers. I think everyone wants to have a certain amount of stability in their life, even though we all know that as farmers we are in a business and there is fluctuation in the business from year to year. You still need to have some kind of stability in your business, and that's what most of these farmers were looking for.

I talked to people like Leo Guilbeault, who is a farmer from Essex county. Leo was instrumental in working on the program for grains and oilseeds. As a government, we initially started that as a pilot project to see how it would work. We wanted to know if farmers would truly take up the program; they did, with great enthusiasm. We extended it by another year. The farmers stayed the course with us, and not only that, but as I say, they formed a coalition of farm organizations and commodity groups to ensure that it was extended to the other producers as well.

When we saw that happening, we felt that not only was this a program that was working well, we knew that the farmers had the ability to speak with one voice. I have to be honest: Farmers are a very independent group of people, and sometimes getting farmers to agree on something is like herding cats. We can agree for a while, and then somebody says something a little contradictory and everybody goes off in a different direction. That didn't happen this time, which tells me that the farmers understood not only the importance of speaking with one voice, but all agreed on the importance of having a business risk management program.

We moved forward with that as a government. I can honestly say it's the very first time that I recall that farmers were instrumental in the development of a program. Most often, as farmers, we end up responding. The government comes forward with the program. They very often may do consultations, but very often it is someone else who creates the program, someone else who crunches the numbers and then comes to the farmers and says, "This is the program we're going to offer."

That's not the case in this one. In this one, as I said, there were farmers, like Leo, who were instrumental in developing the program. They did the number crunching. They went into the farm situations. They knew the business plans. They did the work. They came to us with those things, and we accepted that. For the farm community, that is very important. As I said, it's the first time that I can honestly remember that that ever happened.

I want to say thank you to those producers because they were instrumental in bringing this forward. Without them, without their support of the program and without their consistent support of the program, it would have been a little bit more difficult, but it certainly is something that we have done as a government and that I'm very proud of. I want to say thank you to all those producers who stayed the course on this one because it's the farmers who made this happen.

The other part of the budget bill that I want to talk about is the whole issue around mental health and, in particular, a strategy for children and youth in mental health.

As we travelled the province as members of the select committee, the one thing we heard over and over again from people was the importance of early intervention. Very often, people were telling us about situations that really first presented themselves when the individual was a child and the thought that, had something been done earlier, they could have saved an entire life of anguish and pain for these people. So it's important for us to be moving forward on this.

Like I say, I'm particularly pleased, and I certainly want to thank the member, and I'm not sure—Christine Elliott—

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Whitby—Oshawa.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** Whitby—Oshawa; thank you, Christine. I want to address you properly but I couldn't quite remember. Thank you for bringing forward the motion that created the select committee because that was what started us rolling into something that is very important. The more we heard from our own constituents and the more we heard from Ontarians about this program and about the need for something that was going to address mental health, the more urgent it became for us on the committee.

As we move forward with this, I'm really particularly pleased that we are starting with children and youth, because I am a firm believer that early intervention is critical, that you can save so many lives by doing that at the appropriate time rather than trying to catch up as the person progresses through their life. I say that this is not just about having a strategy; it's also about putting the dollars there. Those are very important because we all knew, as we went through, that we need to change the system, but that's not going to happen without some kind of assistance in a monetary sense. We have moved forward with this.

When I was listening to the budget speech, those were the two things that really struck me, because they were both things that I feel very personally about. They were very important to me. I'm so terribly happy that we were able to address those.

At this point, I'm going to leave the next 10 minutes and turn these over to our member for Toronto Centre. I want to thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity to speak in support of Bill 173.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Minister of Research and Innovation.

1340

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Thank you very much to my colleague for the opportunity.

There's a fundamental change in the economy that I think Premier McGuinty has recognized over several years now, I would say probably ahead of many others, and that is that the very nature of how wealth and prosperity is being generated in Ontario and around the world has changed. For many of our listeners at home, when we

think back to the year we were born—I was born in 1957—two thirds of Canadians worked in manufacturing. They made things for a living. Conrad Hilton famously said at that time that the three most important business decisions were location, location, location. It would be hard to imagine today a more different economy and a more different world. If we have a philosophical breach with the Conservative Party opposite, it is over this fundamental economic question where we fundamentally disagree with them.

Today, 80% of the jobs that are being created are jobs where people don't make anything—they don't make appliances. They don't do that anymore. That's not where most of our jobs are coming from. Eighty per cent of our jobs are in engineering, science, performance, design, financing, managing, invention. It is a dynamic economy that has emerged in Ontario that is unlike any economy that occurred previous to it, and unlike the economies that exist in many other parts of the world.

It is interesting that it is actually this new innovation economy in which wealth is generated in different ways than it was that is causing governments the greatest public policy challenges. In an innovation economy, wealth is generated by people's knowledge and by their capacity to invent and reinvent. For example, we are one of the two largest clean tech clusters. This is in membrane technology and UV technology.

Our auto sector, which has recovered faster than anywhere else I can find in the world, has been creating 8,000 jobs in the last few years, recovering those jobs, and paying back their loans to this government five years ahead of schedule. What's interesting to me is that one of the people who actually does understand this is Jim Flaherty, our Minister of Finance. I wish his party here actually understood it.

One of the reasons that the HST is so important is because it reduces the cost of investments in production lines, in technology and in training. It ends a cascading sales tax that was a job killer in Canada for many years. While that would have been a nice thing to do five or 10 years ago, it is absolutely critical for one very good reason: Because for the years that we've been in government, we've been dealing mostly with a dollar at parity. When the party opposite was in government, they were at a 65-cent dollar or a 70-cent dollar. They had a built-in subsidy for foreign exports. Given the importance of the US economy to driving the Canadian economy, one would think that they would be more sensitive to that.

This budget continues a very strong commitment in a number of areas, and one of them is in education—doubling the amount of student aid, adding 200,000 seats to our universities. To give you an idea of how big 200,000 new seats in the Ontario college and university system is, the University of Toronto, our largest institution, is only 75,000 seats. We have added and will soon have probably added more than two and a half University of Torontos.

We have also brought down the tax burden, and we are building the tax base: \$12 billion in tax reductions for Ontario families and \$4.8 billion for Ontario businesses.

To drive a knowledge economy, it is the relationship between innovation and the production or manufacturing economy that's so important, and closing our productivity gap. It is interesting that the manufacturing that is now growing in Ontario very dynamically, again, is a very different type of manufacturing than existed 10 or 15 years ago. Companies like Linamar and Magna have emerged as the most dynamic and successful auto companies. My friend Linda Hasenfratz, who's the president and CEO and a brilliant business leader, makes this point every day: When you go to the Hasenfratz centre for technology or you go to Kitchener-Waterloo and you see the Communitech centre or the innovation centre in Guelph or the private sector equivalents—is the amount of money and time that is being put in by every employee at Linamar, where they reinvent their product line. That's called advanced manufacturing.

We just opened up a centre in Burlington, a partnership with a company there called EcoSynthetix, which is a \$7-million partnership, where that company will now reinvent nanotechnology coatings through a perpetual line of experiments which will allow them to produce a new line of products almost quarterly.

In Cobourg, Ontario, we just yesterday announced 350 jobs with my friend Lou Rinaldi, who is the member out there for the Northumberland area. That company is now using advanced technology and advanced materials to produce new products every quarter for new customers, and has opened up an expanded international market at a rate that is incredible.

For mid-sized cities like Cobourg and suburban 905 communities like Burlington, these are the communities that previously saw job flight. We are now seeing in mid-sized communities across Ontario the restoration of high-value innovation and high-value advanced manufacturing jobs at an unprecedented level.

What the opposition party does not understand is that Ontarians have done this without a recovery in the United States. One of the greatest reasons I believe in this government's economic policy is because for the first time in Ontario's history, we have a full recovery. We are weeks away from 100% job recovery. We had 3.6% GDP growth in Ontario last year, and if you go back and Google the last year we had 3.6% GDP growth in Ontario, you have to go back decades.

No recovery in the US; a full recovery in Ontario: 1.9% GDP growth, 15% job growth.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** The only way you could screw this up is to elect those people in October. That's the only way that you could actually screw this up.

If they would just agree with their federal cousins on tax policy, because their federal cousins have gotten two things right: the HST and reducing tax on assembly parts. That's why Samsung is here. Samsung creates a supply chain. Maybe they should get some folks over there who have run a successful business in the last 10 years. I go out and speak to 17 CEOs of companies who all tell me that the HST has put over half a billion dollars in there.

What's going to happen? We have just governed through the worst time. Ontarians have stepped up and been counted. In the next two or three years, the US economy is going to come roaring back to life.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** If they just listened a little bit, it would be helpful.

I'm going to suggest that they read something, a great piece by Michael Porter on creating shared value. It's on the front cover of the Harvard Business Review. In that, he compliments Canada and he makes the point that sometime in the next 12, 18 or 24 months, the US economy is going to come roaring back to life. What will that mean? That will mean great demand for Ontario goods in the US economy.

We are better positioned. We have modernized the plants. We have seen the largest per capita investments in R&D coming out of this recession. We have now got 68% of Ontarians with university educations. We are starting the early childhood education. We have put green technology and microFITs on 10,000 farms. We have introduced risk management and stabilized the situation for farmers. While I represent a large urban centre, I spent my adolescent years in Alexandria, Ontario, milking cows and working on a family farm. I know what risk management does. That's the other thing that I'm particularly proud about in this budget.

The incredibly ridiculous things the party opposite did: closing 28 hospitals. How do you close 28 hospitals and shut down 500,000 affordable housing projects? We added 19 new hospitals and 100 new capital projects. Those hospitals and those research facilities are now doing 80% of the life sciences research. We have had a breakthrough in autism. We have had a breakthrough in skin cells. We have had a breakthrough in stem cells. We are now one of the leading centres in stem cell research. This 4.5% of companies in Ontario coming out of the recession, these innovation companies, which now have the highest level of public sector invested R&D, now being matched by huge complementary jobs by the private sector, are generating over 50% of the new jobs.

The Premier talked about innovation five years ago. Ontario is seeing one out of every two new jobs in one of the fastest-growing economies in the Americas right now because of that. I don't think you get a budget that's better than this or compares more favourably—

**1350**

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** There's a good example. I hope people ask for a copy of this transcript. He said it's never been better. Well, I'll tell you some facts. We've got the largest debt, we've increased spending—doubled it—we've doubled the debt, we've doubled the deficit, and you think that's good business. I can tell you, my constituents know what good business is: It's having some respect for taxpayers.

A member of cabinet—so outlandish. You should stand and apologize to the people of Ontario—

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** And then resign.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** And then resign, exactly. Always apologize before you resign.

I do have some time for the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. She knows that Ernie Hardeman had it right. Ernie Hardeman has been preaching the last two years about the risk management plan, with a passion that I hear in caucus from Tim Hudak about trying to take care of working families in Ontario. I don't mean the Working Families that are working for the Liberals; I mean hard-working Ontario families. They're frightened, Madam Speaker, to open their electricity bills. You know that yourself; I've heard you speak of it at your other job here.

The point here is that we have a minister of cabinet saying that things are okay. They're not. We're in trouble. They say they've recovered all the jobs. Since the date they use as a reference point, about two million people have moved to Ontario. All I hear is about jobs and opportunity and the lack of opportunity for our youth. They have the highest tuition in the country—and they think everything is okay.

I hope the Premier is listening today, because health care is hemorrhaging. Mental health: There's not a dollar in here of any substance for this. There's nothing here of any great consequence. They've cut almost everything that they can until after this election. This government here—Ontario should be forewarned. Honest to God, if this election in October—they're not admitting how serious it is here in Ontario. This government here has taken us from the best to the last. It's just tragic, and the minister thinks it's okay.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I rise today to salute the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I do empathize with you somewhat finding yourself semi-retired, but we have had some good conversations. She is right to point out that in every budget there has to be at least something good that can be said about it. There's the old adage that even a broken clock is right twice a day, and the Liberals are right twice in this budget, both in how they've helped the farmers and the money that has been made available for mental health. No one is going to deny that that is a good part of this budget, but you're not going to hear any more. I know what's going to happen: I'm going to be quoted without the “however,” just like you do every day in the Legislature when you quote me—without the “however.”

But there is a “however,” and that is that the government has got it all wrong when it comes to tax policy. I listened to the Minister of Research and Innovation, and he talked about how all of this is creating so many jobs. The reality is that it is not. It is one of the worst ways to spend money to create jobs, as the economists will tell you. If you invest a billion dollars in almost any other way, you're going to create more jobs than are being created by this government with its tax policy.

As an example—and I have a list here from Jim Stanford, and I'm going to be talking about it when I have a

chance to speak—if you put the money into supporting the unemployed and low income, you're going to create six times as many jobs. If you do infrastructure, you're going to create six times as many jobs; or housing, five and a half times as many jobs. If you do a personal income tax reduction, that too is going to create nearly five times as many jobs as giving it away to corporations. Even EI premium reductions are twice as good at creating jobs.

This government has the whole policy wrong in terms of job creation. They're giving money away to people who don't need it and creating no—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Leeanna Pendergast:** It's my pleasure to join in the debate and to comment on the comments by the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and the member from Toronto Centre. I'll start there. The member from Toronto Centre is our esteemed Minister of Research and Innovation. He talked about education, he talked about different things that are happening in our communities across the province, and he did reference Waterloo region—of course, Kitchener–Conestoga is part of that area—and the massive amount of advancements that this minister has made in terms of nanotechnology. Nanotechnology is 10 to the minus ninth—things that small—and the innovation we're able to do as a government and as partnerships in this province is outstanding. The centre of nanotechnology at the University of Waterloo is again a result of this minister's hard work.

He also talked about manufacturing and jobs—we heard the comment about jobs just now. Here are some actual jobs that are coming to the province as a result of this government's investment in this budget. Pratt and Whitney Canada, which is a world leader in design and manufacturing, as we heard the minister talk about, is creating 80 new jobs in Mississauga, investing in new technology and new research and innovation.

Best Theratronics Ltd., which is a developer, manufacturing medical equipment used to treat cancer and make blood supplies safer, is creating 100 new jobs in Ottawa, improving existing product lines and continuing to develop their lines of technology.

Sungrow Canada, a manufacturer of equipment for the clean solar power industry, is creating 50 new jobs right here in Vaughan and making that their North American headquarters. So we are in fact creating real jobs, and those are examples of those real jobs.

I did want to talk about risk management, which the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex spoke about, but in my 10 seconds I just want to acknowledge the mental health strategy that is benefiting our youth up to 18 years of age in this province. As they sit in the gallery, we see the importance.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, as well as the Minister of Research and Innovation.

The Minister of Research and Innovation mentioned the Samsung deal, and all it does is infuriate people. I have to tell you, Madam Speaker, that on the weekend, as the member from Durham would know, I was with the Malloys. Dianne Malloy was saying exactly what was happening regarding her hydro bills and what is taking place and the impacts that are occurring there, and Mrs. Fennell as well—I saw Allan on the weekend.

They've created an environment now where, as Mrs. Fennell was saying, she's just appalled at the hydro smart meters, and it wasn't for a reason I had figured until she brought it to my attention. She said, "You know, I'm confined to the house on the weekend now. I'm stuck doing all my laundry and everything on the weekend now." What has taken place is that this change with these time-of-day rates and everything else has now put her in a position where she as the person taking care of those aspects is spending every weekend doing nothing but laundry and everything else, which is having a huge impact on the economy. Not only that, but it's the individuals and their lifestyle who are being impacted. Where once it used to be that in the evening you would get some of it done and move on from there, lo and behold, here she is on the weekend just taking care of that.

The member from Kitchener–Conestoga mentioned nanotechnology as a result of the Minister of Research and Innovation's hard work. Quite frankly, I don't necessarily see that in my reality, and the reason for that is because I work with a number of organizations. One in Richmond Hill has been doing nanotechnology for an extensive number of years. They produce bubbles at a nano level where if we took this glass of water—sorry to be using that—and ran that water through this technology, it would fill the glass right back to the top at a nano level. It's being used in hydroponics and many other aspects in the province of Ontario. But it's the business people who are making the decisions and creating the jobs, not the current government.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I want to thank the members from Durham, Beaches–East York, Kitchener–Conestoga and Oshawa for their comments.

I am actually a little bit surprised to hear the member from Durham say that the member from Oxford somehow went pushing for this. My interpretation of what has happened around the risk management program is that the member from Oxford actually sort of saw which direction the bandwagon was going and jumped on.

I can honestly say that if he had done that, if he ever really consulted with farmers when he was Minister of Agriculture, we would still have our OMAF offices in our counties. They would not have been taken from us. We would have advisers who would assist us now in doing things we need to do in order to modernize our farms, in order to make sure we're in compliance with the expectations of society. Those things didn't happen.

Nobody asked the farmers when we were talking about closing the OMAF offices. As a matter of fact,

farmers were very adamant about wanting to go keep those offices, and they couldn't get them. Instead, we as farmers now have to go to the private sector for that kind of advice. We have to pay for that kind of advice. We have to decide whether what we're getting is actually not biased by the fact that this adviser may have a financial interest in the advice that they're giving.

We were very pleased to have had those offices, and when they were taken away, our communities were very upset because we used those offices on a regular basis. But you, as a government, decided we weren't going to have them anymore, so you took them away. So please, don't pat yourselves on the back as having listened to the farmers and responded to them, because that's the very last thing you did.

**1400**

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** On behalf of the people of Wellington–Halton Hills, I'm pleased to speak today to Bill 173, An Act respecting 2011 Budget measures, interim appropriations and other matters.

As you are well aware, Madam Speaker, there is considerable latitude extended to members during debate on the government's budget bills. This has been the case for many years, given that the provincial budget extends to every policy and activity under the purview of the provincial government. This debate, therefore, is a good opportunity for members of this Legislature to raise almost any issue affecting the people of our respective constituencies and our great province.

Bill 173 is the first bill arising from the provincial budget, which the Minister of Finance presented in this House on March 29. When I spoke last week on the budget motion, I indicated my belief that this budget will be the government's last budget, and deservedly so. That's because this budget fails to meet two important tests: the test of content and the test of credibility. It is on both tests a miserable failure of leadership.

First I will speak about its content. Many people would have hoped that this government would show they were listening to everyday Ontario families, their concerns and their aspirations. This government has watched with seeming indifference as their cost of living, including taxes that they pay to the provincial government, has gone way up.

Increases in taxes, hydro bills and the cost of gasoline have become a major burden for many people, particularly our seniors on fixed incomes. We're hearing it all the time, and no doubt the government members are hearing it too in their ridings. I'm hearing it right across my riding, from Centre Wellington to Erin, from Puslinch to Guelph-Eramosa to Halton Hills. People are fed up, not only because their costs keep going up, but because they believe, quite rightly, that the provincial government has no credible plan to address these problems and, as I mentioned, that the provincial government is indifferent to their plight.

Instead of providing solutions, the finance minister provided a vindictive attack against the official oppos-

ition in his budget speech. In my 21 years in the Legislature, I've never seen a performance quite like it. It was unprecedented in its presentation; irresponsible, even reprehensible, in its tone and content. He actually implied that our party, if elected, would cut health care, lay off 33,000 teachers and reduce the number of doctors by 12,000—he went on and on—all of which is 100% false.

It's too bad the minister didn't spend a little less time attacking the opposition and a little more time defending and explaining his hydro rates. If the minister is so interested in compare-and-contrast exercises, we're more than happy to respond. People need an accurate response.

In the past eight years, the Premier's policies have contributed to Ontario's decline. We were once a leader in Confederation; today we are a laggard in Confederation. We are a have-not province, receiving equalization payments, in effect, from Newfoundland. In contrast, the Leader of the Opposition believes we can do better. With the right policies, he would encourage growth in the economy. He offers real change from the mistakes of the past and a chance at a better future for all of us.

The Premier believes election promises are meant to be broken and that people will forget, or forgive if they think your intentions are good. In contrast, the Leader of the Opposition will not promise what he knows he can't deliver. He understands credibility is hard-earned and effective leadership requires mutual trust.

The Premier's overall government spending has us on the road to a financial crisis. The provincial debt has almost doubled under his watch. They are borrowing almost \$1.86 million an hour, every hour of every day. That's more than \$31,000 a minute, or about \$516 a second. In contrast, the Leader of the Opposition will set priorities, reduce spending to affordable levels and work towards balancing the provincial budget so that we're living within our means again. The Premier does not hesitate to raise taxes, even when he has promised he won't. In contrast, the Leader of the Opposition wants to reduce taxes.

The Premier has lost touch with the cares of the average Ontario family. In contrast, the Leader of the Opposition respects and stands up for hard-working Ontario families. That is the real comparison that voters will be making in about six months' time.

To the Minister of Finance, I would suggest that he should have known to include in the budget speech even a single mention of one of those voters' most pressing concerns: the high and rising cost of hydro. At least twice, I've told this House about a constituent and mother who wrote to me, unsolicited, to say that she would have to choose between paying her hydro bill and going to the grocery store. Her message reads as follows:

"I'm probably sending this out to deaf ears or to someone who might not care, but it's worth a try.

"I'm a single mother and work hard for everything I bring to the table. I ask for no handouts and am proud that I can raise my son on my own. I do have a very tight budget, and having electric heat puts a real strain on my

son and I, especially in the winter months that are upon us....

"Question: Do I keep my son's tummy full or do I keep him warm, you tell me because HST is going to affect my hydro bill big this year. I'm really concerned about how much I have to subtract from my grocery bill in order to keep the house warm and my son from getting sick.... I don't know where to turn but I'm sure hoping you can help."

Again I say, in this province of abundance, such circumstances should be unheard of, but under this government they are becoming increasingly common.

Hydro prices, by the government's own admission, will rise another 46% over the next five years, and after that, bills will rise another 10% as the Ontario clean energy benefit expires. These facts come straight from the government's own fall economic statement, pages 11 and 12. It's another example of how this government's budget does not address the real challenges facing our family budgets. Instead, they continue their expensive energy experiments no matter what the cost, no matter how strong the opposition.

The Minister of the Environment continues to make inconsistent statements and comments regarding industrial wind farms, fueling confusion and anger on the part of communities across Ontario, including those in his own riding, who believe, with good reason, that he just isn't listening to their concerns. In contrast, my position has been this: First, there should be a moratorium on new wind farm developments until a comprehensive health study is completed. Second, we must restore the municipal planning authority stripped by this government's Green Energy Act.

As municipalities are quickly finding out, this government's promises of consultation are just not to be trusted. The government is very good at ramming through its own big spending programs, but they usually come at the expense of priorities that our municipalities identify as most important to their communities. In many cases, municipalities have been advocating for priorities—priorities that require provincial assistance—for many years, and often to deaf ears. Just south of Guelph, the Highway 6 realignment project—or the Morrison bypass, as it's known locally—is a perfect example. This much-needed highway has been on the books for the Ministry of Transportation for decades. For some 30 years, Puslinch township has asked the government to start construction, but there always seems to be some excuse for dithering and delay. This year, the government plans to increase spending on provincial highway infrastructure to more than \$2.1 billion. Surely they could find room to fund this project, which is critical to the movement of people and goods in our part of the province.

It's a similar story on health care, one of the most important responsibilities of the provincial government. This budget shows government expenditures of over \$2.5 billion on hospital infrastructure. Surely, with such large-scale investment planned, they could find room to fund our community's key priorities. For almost four years,

I've been calling upon the government to allow Groves Memorial Community Hospital in Centre Wellington to move forward to the next stage of planning for the new facility we will need. Surely they could identify that key priority. And surely within a budget of over \$2.5 billion, they could find what's needed to provide meaningful support to Georgetown hospital, to move ahead with their plans for a new emergency room and CT scanner.

Of course, these priorities might be more easily met if the government hadn't diverted precious health care resources from infrastructure and front-line care, where they're most needed, to excessive bureaucracy, as we see with the local health integration networks, the LHINs, and most egregiously with the eHealth scandal. But that, unfortunately, has been the story of this government: more spending, more waste and fewer results for taxpayers. Over and over, this government has spent without restraint as long as they believe it will win them votes. With government spending that's out of control, the result is always higher taxes or higher debt, or both.

We're told that this government has ramped up spending by an astounding 77% since they assumed office. Meanwhile, in the same period, we're told that Ontario's economy grew by only 9%. As the Leader of the Opposition has said, "You can't run your house that way, you can't run your business that way, and we can no longer continue to run the province of Ontario that way." He is absolutely right.

#### 1410

Also correct is the Waterloo Region Record in its editorial of March 30, which says that the Liberal budget "represents a colossal lost opportunity to tackle the most serious economic threat facing this province—its massive, surging and crippling debt."

The editorial goes on to say: "During their eight years in office, the Liberals have been too willing to live with annual deficits that drove up Ontario's debt by 74%—from \$138.8 billion in 2003-04 to \$241.4 billion in the coming year. They have never lacked a vision to introduce new programs, simply a plan to pay for it all. That is a major oversight.

"What makes this trend more alarming is the government's willingness to continue piling on new debt" to the mountain it has already built. "It plans to continue running annual deficits until 2017-18. By then, according to its own predictions, Ontario's debt will have risen to a \$307.5-billion Matterhorn casting its chilling shadow over the entire province.

"Debt may not be on the radar screens of most Ontarians. It should. In the coming year's budget, Ontario will spend \$10.2 billion merely to service its debt. After health and education, that stands as the province's third greatest expenditure. If interest rates rise, as they are expected to later this year, debt costs will become even more burdensome. And as more of each tax dollar goes to fund debt and less for programs and services, taxpayers will increasingly feel cheated.

"Moreover, the Liberals are taking a risky gamble in allowing the debt to continue its upward spiral for the

next six years. By then, Ontario could be engulfed in yet another economic downturn—which could necessitate new stimulus spending and even higher debt."

This is a colossal failure on the part of this government. Our children will spend their working years paying for this Liberal legacy of debt, and they deserve better.

What does the Minister of Finance have to say? How does he intend to come to grips with his shameful legacy of spiralling spending? He pledges to restrain spending growth to just 1%. What a preposterous claim. Who do they think they're kidding?

Again, I would quote the Record: "It is the same government that increased program spending by 62% since taking power (from \$70.1 billion in 2003-04 to \$113.7 billion this year) and now suddenly thinks it can limit annual program spending increases to 1.0%. Considering that Ontario's aging population will demand more health care, not less, such budget dreams are hued in Technicolor."

That's what I meant when I said at the outset that this government has failed to meet the test of credibility. Year after year, this government has rapidly ramped up the debt, and now they promise to limit their spending increases to just 1% a year? This number is indeed hued in Technicolor. It's a work of fiction, arguably even a fantasy, and without a doubt, inevitably it will prove to be a failure. That is the history of this government.

History also tells us that this government, when faced with a fiscal problem of its own making, won't hesitate to raise taxes. They say they won't raise taxes, but nobody believes them anymore. After promising not to raise taxes in the election of 2003, they brought in the so-called health tax, a misnomer to be sure, because of course, as we know, the money goes directly into the consolidated revenue fund and is not directly tied to health care.

Again promising not to raise taxes in the election of 2007, they brought in the HST, raising taxes on essentials like heat, hydro and gasoline. After promising not to raise taxes, they brought in a wide range of fees, including, of course, that dreaded eco tax; again, another mess of this government's own making. They've done it before, and, if given the chance, they'll raise taxes again.

If re-elected next October, the McGuinty Liberals would, I assert, raise the HST by between two and five percentage points: It would go from 13% to between 15% and 18%. After all, we've effectively seen a 15% sales tax before, until the federal government lowered the GST from its former level of 7% down to 5%. Other countries have value-added taxes higher than ours, most notably Britain, with its current 20% value-added tax rate.

The budget document offers nothing that will rebuild trust in this government. It shows that if given the chance, this government will raise taxes again. It's not a matter of if; it's a matter of when and it's a matter of how. Will it be an overt tax increase or a backdoor tax increase of even higher eco fees, never-ending debt retirement charges or even higher hydro rates? They just won't say.

The budget provides little in the way of reassurance to Ontario families who are struggling, families who are anxious about their future and their children's future. They're asking: How high will interest rates rise? Will I be able to afford my mortgage payments? Will I be able to afford to stay in my home? How much higher will gas prices rise? Will I be able to afford to fill up the tank? How much higher will hydro rates go? Will I be able to heat my home? For how long will I have a job? Will I be able to earn enough to support my family? People are asking these questions in my riding and across the province, in many cases more seriously and sincerely than ever before, yet the budget pays them no recognition and offers no reason for them to trust this government. On the contrary to the name of the budget bill, it will most certainly not lead to a better tomorrow for Ontario if this policy is continued.

Fortunately, there is hope for a better tomorrow, and that will come with a better government in October. As the people compare and contrast their options, here is what I believe they will find: They will see that while they have made Ontario a laggard in Confederation and a have-not province, we believe that the right policies will support economic growth, moving away from the mistakes of the past. They'll see that their record is littered with broken promises and shattered potential. We will not promise what we know we can't deliver. They'll see that credibility is hard-earned and effective leadership requires mutual trust. They'll see that while they put us on the road to financial ruin, nearly doubling the debt, we will set priorities, reduce spending to affordable levels and work towards balancing the provincial budget so that we are living within our means once again. They'll see that while they have no hesitation in raising taxes, we want to reduce taxes. They'll see that while they have lost touch with average people and families, we will stand up for hard-working Ontario families. They'll see that while they offer the promise of an Ontario in perpetual decline, we offer the promise of a prosperous and better future for all Ontarians.

That will be the contrast. On that basis, people will render their decision.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to the member from Wellington-Halton Hills. He spoke passionately and, I think, well. He talked about and had a pretty good analysis of where this budget is, what it's going to accomplish and what it is not going to accomplish.

In this place, there's often much hyperbole coming from government benches about everything being all rosy, everything being all good—the number of jobs that are being created, getting back almost the number of jobs that were lost. But the reality is, for so many people who live out there, they're not seeing that happen to them. They are not seeing any real improvements in their lives. If they are lucky enough to hold on to a job, they're seeing that the real wages have not increased at all since 1991—that's the last time that people's wages actually

outpaced inflation—so that most people, during the life of this entire government, are no better off, and most of them are in fact worse off, than they were when the Liberals were first elected in 2003. They are worse off because they are having to pay taxes that are new to them.

Of course, one bandies about and one hears most often about the HST. I'm constantly amazed, when I go out to events big and small, political and non-political people, that it's always the HST. It is the albatross around this government's neck, which they continue to say is a wonderful thing. I am surprised that they get away with it.

Even today, there was a little seminar across the street being put on by the Society of Energy Professionals. He was talking about how electricity was priced in Ontario, and then he got to the point about the HST and it being a 13% extra tax that people are having to pay and how it of itself is the major reason that people's prices for electricity have gone up, and how the public has reacted to them.

This is a man who makes his living on that, and I'm telling you, the government should be very worried about what they've done.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank the member from Wellington-Halton Hills for his comments. I especially want to spend a little bit of time talking about his comments in relation to the deficit and debt numbers that he referenced in his speech. I thank him for his remarks. I think what was left out of the remarks, however, was any context for how Ontario, as well as Canada, other provinces and the United States and all their subnational governments there, arrived in the situations that they are in.

**1420**

Most people realize and understand that we've just gone through the greatest recession since the Great Depression, as it is described. It has always struck me, as a member of a provincial government, how, on the federal level, Stephen Harper and the people over there in our national government are somehow still perceived as being these magicians when it comes to financial management for the country. And yet, when you think about what their total debt number was, their total in-year deficit, I believe they peaked—their one-year high was over \$60 billion—I'm looking at my friend from Whitby-Oshawa; I'm not trying to throw any darts here—over \$60 billion. In Ontario, our number came in at about \$19 billion. So if you think about Ontario as being about 40% of the total economy of Canada, and when you compare the total deficit numbers in Ontario to those of our national government, I'd have to think you could see quite easily that most jurisdictions, most governments, found themselves in some very difficult circumstances. So somehow, Stephen Harper and the federal Conservatives come off as great financial managers and we here in the province of Ontario apparently can't manage the budget. I just wanted to put that on the record, though I know they don't think so.

I also wanted to mention that he spoke a little bit about health care. I can tell you some examples in Thunder Bay. My riding is Thunder Bay–Atikokan. In health care, the improvements that we have seen locally in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan are significant. I'm especially proud of the angioplasty program that has seen 500 to 600 people now not have to leave our community and travel to southern Ontario. Twenty-nine hundred more doctors have been hired in the province since we came to government. Total spending has gone from \$30 billion to \$46 billion in the time we've been in government. About 900,000 to one million more people are now finding care through a primary care provider as well as a nurse practitioner-led clinic that took 3,200 orphan patients off the street.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'd like to congratulate my colleague the member from Wellington–Halton Hills, who I believe has really set out the true economic picture in Ontario right now, and it's not a really pretty picture. I suspect that's why, in his budget speech, the Minister of Finance spent an inordinate amount of time attacking us for what he perceived to be decisions that we would make with respect to health care and education spending—all just a bunch of fearmongering and not at all true.

The fact of the matter here is that this is a government that just can't stop spending. Their out-of-control spending has resulted in a doubling of the debt in Ontario since they took over in 2003. Imagine all of the debt that accumulated up to Confederation. That has been doubled in about eight years. It's ridiculous.

As the member from Wellington–Halton Hills wisely pointed out, the fact is that we're now spending 10 cents of every dollar on interest payments to other governments, to other entities that we've borrowed money from, which makes it the third priority in spending besides health care and education, over time. That's while interest rates are low. Imagine when interest rates rise, as we know they inevitably will. That's going to be a real financial disaster for Ontario.

That's why we keep talking about things like getting the deficit under control, getting the debt under control. It's so important for our children and grandchildren, so that we can continue to spend on things like education, like health care.

We have a government right now that's spending \$1 billion on the eHealth fiasco, where we're still looking for something to happen there; \$1 billion wasted; \$250 million spent—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order. Member from Peterborough.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** —on local health integration networks that are doing nothing to improve front-line health care but are all about increasing executive salaries and not making any kind of difference to the bottom line.

With respect to education spending, we need to make sure that we continue to spend. We need to spend time

too on the children who need our help, children with special needs, who right now are not getting the attention they deserve.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I want to zero in on a couple of the things that my colleague from Wellington–Halton Hills said in his speech. In particular, I want to focus on the HST.

I think he's quite correct when he says that for many people in Ontario, their incomes are actually less now than their income was, say, three or four years ago, so a lot of families in Ontario actually have less money in their pocket month by month.

The other reality that people are facing is that one of the necessities of life if you're going to live in this so-called modern world, the electricity bill, has skyrocketed through the roof. It is not unusual to see people who had a hydro bill of, say, \$150 a month six or seven years ago now looking at \$400 a month, even \$500 a month. Then when you add the HST on top of that, there's further escalation.

So people who have less money in their pocket—and I'm talking here overwhelmingly of modest and middle-income families—are being told by this government that they have to find, between the hydro bill, the heating bill and the overall impact of the HST, another \$2,000 or \$3,000 a year. The reality for people is that they simply do not have it. A simple increase of \$100 a month in the hydro bill is \$1,200 a year. A \$200-a-month increase in the hydro bill is \$2,400 a year.

This government doesn't seem to get it. They're hitting people when they have less money, and people can't afford it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Wellington–Halton Hills has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I'm pleased to reply briefly to the members for Beaches–East York, Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Whitby–Oshawa and Kenora–Rainy River. Of course, I think all of us would relish an opportunity to continue to debate these issues, but I want to express my appreciation to those members who responded to my remarks.

I do wish to reply to the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan because he seemed to want to make a gratuitous attack against the federal government, use this opportunity to complain about the federal government in an attempt to divert attention away from his government's record. Of course, we're here to debate the provincial levels, not the federal ones, primarily, and we are here to debate the fiscal record of this government.

Again, I would refer all members, if they haven't read the budget papers, this document that came with the budget speech itself, to pages 204 and 205, where you see the government's so-called plan to eliminate the deficit. I've raised this many times in the House in recent months to ask government members to explain how they're going to keep spending increases to 1% or less per year. I have never received an explanation.

That gives us, really, the conclusion that we've drawn, which is that they have no alternative but to raise taxes if they form the government again. The fact is, right now, the \$16.3-billion deficit that they're projecting for 2011-12, which is such a large number that very few of us can get our heads around it, means that the government is currently borrowing \$1.86 million an hour, every hour, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year—almost \$2 million an hour. That's what a deficit of \$16.3 billion means.

If the government isn't prepared to acknowledge that fact and to come forward with a more credible and honest budget which will deal with this issue and confront it head on, then the people of Ontario will have no choice but to elect a new government on October 6.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** This is a horrendous budget. As I said earlier, it had two bright and shiny things in it—and no one is going to say that they weren't bright and shiny—if you are a farmer or if you or a loved one has need of mental health services. There is something in the budget for those two groups, and I will be the first to admit it. But the rest of the budget is horrendous.

Come the inevitable vote, I know that Liberals will be saying, "Oh, there's the NDP voting against progressive measures that will help farmers and will help those with mental health issues." We will vote against this budget because of everything else it contains, not with the budget because it has two good things in it.

With this budget, the government stands there proud of having nearly \$17 billion in deficit—\$17 billion, the largest deficit in the history of this province. They put Bob Rae to shame: double, triple whatever happened then. I remember the Liberals screaming in those days, not because I was here in this Legislature but because it was on the front page of the newspaper every day. It doesn't seem to bother them today.

This is a horrendous budget because there is no help whatsoever for those who are most in need in Ontario, no help at all.

April 1 was also the day the new measures for the special diet allowance were introduced. It was also the day that the government began its many cutbacks for those who are most truly in need. And there was nothing there at all. I'm going to deal with that.

**1430**

This is a horrendous budget because of the huge corporate tax giveaways that aren't going to do a single thing and are probably the least capable instruments that a government has to create jobs.

It is a horrendous budget because this government has chosen to do nothing about runaway CEO salaries or to put a cap or a hard limit on them.

It is a horrendous budget because it will allow for the first time for the privatizing of child care programs in our schools—after-school programs—and I think that Charles Pascal, who authorized that report on which the government relies so much, must be just a little more than miffed when he sees that.

It is a horrendous budget—as all budgets, this government is very good at hiding things in budgets. It took me nearly a week to find out that there is a schedule 17 of the budget, which contains the Gaming Control Act, where the government's changing all of the ways in which people gamble in Ontario. It's a really meaty act, schedule 17, and the government's changing all of that under the guise of a budget. Everybody's looking at what's in it, but they aren't looking at how the government is completely changing and ramping up revenues they're hoping to get from gaming.

It is a horrendous budget because it institutes, in really technical terms, the continuation of P3s.

To deal with each of these in turn, the \$17 billion is unsustainable. This government knows it. This government is talking in the long term—how they're going to try to ease that down and down and over the period of five or six years get it back to zero again. But this government is totally responsible for the deficit which they have put upon the people of Ontario, a deficit for which we are paying millions of dollars—as was said—per hour in interest rates. That's what this government has done, and this budget did nothing to help it get out of that.

I remember when this government stood up and had a plan—and I actually voted with and celebrated with the now Minister of Health when we were going to do something to ease those who lived in poverty. I remember that day. I remember having at least some hope that a few people who found themselves living in poverty would be helped by this government. And 2008 is a good year to remember because the Daily Bread Food Bank just came out with this report, and it shows that each and every year since 2008 the number of people going to food banks has increased. So as this government talks about how they're reducing or studying ways to reduce poverty, in fact, every single year food bank usage is going up.

Who's it going up for? Not so much for children, I will admit that, but it's going up for the elderly, it's going up for single people, it's going up for the disabled, it's going up for all of those people who are on the margins of our society. All of those groups, 25 in 5 and all of them who came here in 2008 with such hope that this government finally was going to do something, must be extremely disappointed.

They believed with all their hearts that something would happen, and they see that all that has happened is that they are being studied and studied and studied again, and that there is nothing, when the government has to come down and say which side they're on in the budget, for them. There's lots of money for corporate CEOs, and there's lots of money to reduce corporate taxes, but there's nothing for them except increased use of food banks. There's no new housing, there's no new programs, no real opportunities, and they're just looking at how bad things are going to be for them.

There's nothing in this budget that's going to help cities—nothing at all. There was some money in past budgets which still hasn't been spent. I'm looking at Toronto and its horrible new plan for subway develop-

ment, dreamed up on the back of a postcard by the now mayor of the city of Toronto—and the government falls all over themselves to agree with that. Instead of instituting and saying that they're going to pay for a forward-looking plan like Metrolinx, they have nothing at all. This budget has done nothing for cities, towns or villages from one side of this province to another.

Then we have the whole thing of, why is all this happening? It's happening because of these huge corporate tax giveaways. I listened to the Minister of Infrastructure today. The same old lines; the same lines that mean nothing at all: the creation of 50 jobs here or 50 jobs there, as if the money that he was giving away was creating all these wonderful jobs. In fact, that is not true at all. It took Statistics Canada to come out with the truth, and a few brave souls, one of them being Karen Howlett of the *Globe and Mail*, who on Wednesday, April 6 wrote: "But an analysis of Statistics Canada figures by the *Globe and Mail* reveals that the rate of investment in machinery and equipment has declined in lockstep with falling corporate tax rates over the past decade. At the same time, the analysis shows, businesses have added \$83 billion to their cash reserves since the onset of the recession in 2008."

This is what this government's policy is. This government's policy is giving \$83 billion to corporate Canada to fatten their wallets. No jobs are being created, or no meaningful jobs, as a result of what you're doing over there. That's why this is a horrendous budget.

It didn't take long for other people to weigh in on the Karen Howlett article. I think one of the ones who actually weighed in fastest and best was Jim Stanford, a very good economist. He writes a couple of things that I think need to be part of the record.

First: "Corporate tax cuts have very little positive impact on employment, since they induce very little change in business capital investment spending. Historical evidence in Canada since 2000 (when the corporate tax rate, then 29.1%, began to be dramatically reduced) indicates that business investment has deteriorated since then—whether measured as a share of GDP, as a share of existing capital stock, or as a share of corporate cash flow." That's the reality. This idea that you trickle down by giving the money to the very rich at the top and they're going to help everybody all the way to the bottom is some pretty bad Reaganomics, and this government ought to know better.

Jim Stanford goes on to state: "By the third quarter of 2010, the cash and short-term financial assets of non-financial businesses in Canada had reached \$480 billion—almost a half-trillion dollars.... Since the advent of the recession two years earlier, businesses socked away an additional \$83 billion in new cash." He goes on to say: "Further enhancing the cash flow of business, with no strings attached to incremental investment undertakings, will accomplish nothing other than enhancing that large stockpile of idle cash even further."

Surely this government must understand that when you're giving this money away to virtually no effect, you

are not helping the people of this province. You are not helping the poor. You're not helping cities. You're not helping children to learn. You're not helping universities. You're helping people sock away \$83 billion, to no effect except to make the rich richer. That's all that's happening with this budget and with your government.

Jim Stanford goes on to write: "When governments allocate large sums of revenue to corporate tax cuts, those resources are no longer available to fund other priorities—like extending EI benefits for laid-off workers, investing in infrastructure or housing, or supporting public programs through transfer payments (like health care or education). All of those programs create far more jobs than corporate tax cuts. Therefore, shifting money from EI benefits (or infrastructure or public services) into corporate tax cuts destroys net jobs."

He goes on and he makes quite a brilliant analysis, which I spoke about very briefly in response to the Minister of Infrastructure. He shows that for every \$1 billion of stimulus funds that this government could spend, the worst possible way for you to spend it in terms of job creation is for corporate income tax reductions, and yet that's the one you choose. Why do you choose this? Why do you choose not to create jobs? I don't understand. I don't understand any of you who choose the worst possible option and then stand up and are proud of it.

#### 1440

As any economist will tell you, if you give that billion dollars to support unemployed low-income people—those who are suffering at the margins—you're going to create 18,755 net jobs within the province. If you spend a billion dollars for infrastructure investment, you're going to create 17,652 net new jobs. If you put the money into housing, you will create 16,548 jobs, and heaven knows, we desperately need housing, particularly for those with lower incomes, new Canadians and people starting out. We need housing in almost all of our municipalities across Ontario. If you take that billion dollars and even put it into personal income tax reductions, you're going to create 11,032 jobs. If you put it into EI premium reductions, you're still going to create 6,619 jobs. But if you put the billion dollars as you chose to do it, you're going to create 3,310. So the worst thing you could possibly do with that billion dollars is what you've chosen to do and what you stand up here, day after day, and brag about.

It is hard for anyone to fathom why you think giving money to super-rich companies so they can put it in their pocket, sock it away—some of them send it offshore—is a good investment. That is what is so morally wrong with this government and with this budget, and it's why I could not possibly consider supporting it, in spite of the fact that I'm happy for the farmers and happy for the fact that we have finally recognized that people with mental health issues deserve more support than we've given them in the past.

I also have to ask this government, how can you be proud of the runaway CEO salaries? We look at them every day. They've been the topic in question period in

this Legislature for four or five of the last 10 days. We look at how much money we're paying for people who work. We're looking at equal amounts of money being given to them when they don't work, when they haven't even worked the year before, and they're on the sunshine list with half a million dollars. How is it that this government can continue such a practice?

I do know that last year or the year before, there was a bill put forward by Andrea Horwath, my colleague the leader of the NDP, which would cap CEO salaries at twice the rate of pay of the Premier of Ontario, and I remember speaking at that time.

Whether you think the Premier is doing a good job or not, he has a tough job to do. He is responsible for his party, for his government, for the people of Ontario, for a \$120-billion budget, countless government departments and 723 agencies. He can be queried every single day on his actions by the press and by the people in this Legislature. It is one tough job, and we choose to pay him \$220,000 a year—I'm sure he earns every penny of it. I'm sure that most of the members here, if they're doing their job diligently—and I think most are honourable members and do—probably earn their pay as well.

But I have to question why this government thinks the corporate CEOs whom you protect so assiduously during question period, and at all times you try not to talk about their salaries or why they're getting payouts or why they're getting severance pay—why do you try to protect all of this, people who earn not twice but three or four or five or six times as much as the Premier of Ontario?

Only one of two things can be said: Either you think these people are worth six times as much as the Premier of Ontario or, on the other side, you think the Premier of Ontario is only worth one sixth of what some of these people are. It doesn't work any other way.

We believe that these salaries have become obscene. If you're looking at ways of cutting back government expense, it cannot be on the backs of the poor and those who so desperately need the money; it needs to be on the backs of some of those who earn those obscene salaries.

And I see the member from Davenport was about to clap but thought better of that. I guess he's afraid of what his colleagues in the government might have to say about that.

So if you want to know what the budget should have done, the budget should have started to rein that in.

We looked at what else was contained in here, and that is the privatizing of child care programs in schools. This was particularly worrisome. I didn't really realize that the budget contained this provision, and certainly the finance minister, standing in his place on budget day, didn't laud this as one of the goals or one of the great things this government was doing. It was simply hidden away in the budget process, as so many things are: hidden away, hoping no one is going to find it. But as you look today, it's quite clear what the government's intent is. The government intends to allow for for-profit corporations; it would allow the schools the option of contracting out the before- and after-school program to third-party providers instead of delivering it themselves.

Well, it's taken a few days, but people who have discovered that this is contained within the body of the budget bill wonder what Charles Pascal and his report and this government's commitment to it were all about, because this is not what they expected of this government. It's not what I think Mr. Pascal expected when he was talking about full-day learning and an opportunity for before- and after-school programs so that children would have the very best opportunity. He didn't think it would be sold out to the lowest bidder. Because that is, in fact, what is going to happen.

People like the Atkinson Foundation, which does a lot of good work here in Ontario, but particularly in the Toronto area, and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association have raised concerns that the for-profit care will be delivered by low-paid staff and will not be of good quality. I think we have every reason to be worried. If you're going to allow it to be done by the lowest bidder, then you can expect that the programs will not be done in the same meticulous and caring way that they are done by child care professionals.

Now, I've only got a little over a minute left, and I wanted to talk about something which I found—and I was really quite surprised. As you go through the schedules—and I remember two or three budgets ago, I went through the schedules and found out that within the body of the budget, the government decided to extend the term of municipally elected people, mayors and reeves and councillors, from three years to four years. They hid it in schedule H, I think it was, of that particular budget. There it was, hidden, unannounced, with people wondering, "What is this all about?"—a government hiding a program which had been very highly contentious through a number of public policy forums and commissions in this Legislature. But this one here, I found this time. This is the Gaming Control Act, 1992, and schedule 17 changes to it.

One of the changes—and I read this to you: "In addition to any provision of the Labour Relations Act ... no trade union within the meaning of that act shall represent persons employed in or with respect to a gaming site or in the operation of a lottery scheme unless the trade union and those of its officers, officials and agents prescribed by the regulations are registered as suppliers." It goes on then to describe suppliers. I don't know how any of the unions are going to exist anymore.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise to add to the debate, I hope, and to pass some comments on those that were just made by the member from Beaches-East York.

I think it's always healthy when you have a variety of opinions on the budget, and we've heard some of those expressed today. I think you need to take into account the economic times that we find ourselves in and have found ourselves in for some time. So if there was ever a time that called out for a balanced budget, for one that addressed the social needs and the educational needs of

our society, along with the economic needs, this would be, I think, a likely time.

My experience is not like that of the member from Beaches–East York. The response I've had in my community to this budget has been a very positive one. The response that I've noticed from most of the media—probably not all, but from most of the media—is that the budget has been received well. That is because, I think, people can honestly say in the province of Ontario that the economy is improving.

The jobs are starting to come back to the province of Ontario.

**1450**

When you compare ourselves to other jurisdictions around the world, if you look at the UK, for example, it's only recovered 40% of its jobs, and, unfortunately, our neighbour to the south, whom we rely on with trade, has only recovered 15% of the jobs that it lost during the recession. Ontario has recovered somewhere around the mid-90% of the jobs that it lost during the recession. I think that's a sign that Ontario's on the right track.

Are we out of the woods? No, we're not. Do we need to eliminate the deficit? Yes, we do, and we have a plan to do that. We're protecting the progress we've made in education: Full-day learning for our four- and five-year-olds is scheduled to go ahead as planned; we're adding 60,000 additional college and university spaces to our system by 2015-16; and, as has been noted, I'm glad to hear, by members of all parties, we've invested in children's mental health. One thing that can't be argued about in this budget is that that was a sound investment.

I understand that there will be a variety of opinions, but on balance, I think this is a good budget and is worthy of support.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I always listen to the member from Beaches–East York; he's quite honest, very sincere and quite genuine. I would say that he does stand up for people. When he speaks of his disappointment in the budget, I'm impressed. I applaud his honesty and remarks. I'll tell you why.

I see Pat Dillon walking in here today—he's a person I know, and he's in charge of Working Families, an excellent representative here, I suspect, of the McGuinty government—but my point being, what really is going on here is that—now, the member that just spoke, there, the other one where they look the gas plant out of his riding, Mr. Flynn—

**Interjection:** The seat-saver program.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The seat-saver program. They're spending \$1.8 million—I'm speaking directly to the people of Ontario—\$1.8 million each and every hour of every day more than they're taking in as tax revenue. I'm going to repeat that: Every hour of every day, they're spending \$1.8 million more than they have in revenue.

What that means is, your child that's in university—the 60,000 new spots or whatever it is, they're going to be getting the bill for that when they graduate, because

they're borrowing the money. Don't let anyone tell you anything different; they're borrowing the money.

If you look deep down on the numbers on this, they are giving a 10% cut to your energy bill. Now, they're not really doing that for everyone. They said today in the House that they're doing it—they're not doing it for everyone. It's income-tested, so it goes to the lower—by the way, they are borrowing a billion dollars to do that, so they can give them the money back, because they went too deep on the cost of electricity. They went too deep, too fast.

I'm very concerned that Ontario is heading towards the largest abyss in the history of Ontario. It's tragic, and they've got an auditor coming in just before the election to tell us that they can't manage the deficit.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I think the member from East York must have been handed the NDP's speaking notes for the 1996 Harris budget, but not this year's financial plan.

For Mississauga, my home city, the 80 new people working for Pratt and Whitney vehemently would agree that Ontario's now manufacturing-friendly tax structure promotes growth and prosperity. The 53 new people working for Concept Plastics in Mississauga as recent hires, full-time, who manufacture auto accessories, would disagree with the member for Beaches–East York. Indeed, the federal NDP leader, Jack Layton, disagrees with the member for Beaches–East York in the federal NDP platform.

Our way in Ontario is forward to a future in which the industries of tomorrow come here to build companies, to build careers, to build investments in such fields as renewable energy, digital media, water management, financial services and those other knowledge-based sectors of prosperity for the 21st century. Perhaps the Ontario NDP wants us to help create nothing, to generate no electric power, to develop no new industries and to give away every advantage that Ontario now has.

We've turned the corner in Ontario, and we choose to go forward; not to sit down, throw up our hands and just give up. Our future—our Ontario future—encourages the proud, hard-working people of this province with the ideas of the future to do their thinking, their making, their marketing, their investment and their banking right here in Ontario.

Eleven out of 12 of the people who were out of work during the recession are now back working. Game, set and match. Let's pass this budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** I just have a few simple comments in response to the member. Taxes have been seen, and have always been seen, by economists of every stripe as a tool for fiscal management. There are circumstances when taxes should or could be raised, and there are times when taxes should or could be decreased. To suggest that taxes should never be reduced is to suggest that the only thing that could ever happen to taxes is that they will be

increased and continue to be increased. I think that is simply not a sustainable principle of fiscal management.

I think if people are paying attention to the federal election, they will see that even Jack Layton from the NDP is now suggesting tax cuts for small business. So where they make the line is very confusing, in terms of the NDP.

Our combination of policies, including tax cuts, including infrastructure spending, has resulted in six successive quarters of economic growth—probably among the best recoveries from this recession, the worst recession since the Great Depression, internationally, of all those jurisdictions with advanced economies. We're very proud of that result, and that is going to continue under the budget that has been presented to this House.

We are satisfied, and I think the people of Ontario are satisfied, with the combination of income tax cuts for individuals, corporate income tax cuts and infrastructure funding, which has resulted in the greatest recovery of any jurisdiction, at least in North America, and competing for the same—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. The member from Beaches–East York has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I thank the members from Oakville, Durham and Mississauga–Streetsville and the Minister of Infrastructure for their comments.

The Minister of Infrastructure talked about the federal NDP policy. Yes, the policy is fundamentally different from your flawed policy because you give it to people who do not create jobs. The NDP policy, federally, is to give it to small businesses tied in to the creation of those same jobs. It's one thing to give away \$83 billion and receive almost nothing for it, and it is another thing to use a tax policy to actually create jobs, as small businesses do throughout the course of this province and throughout the course of this country, and to actually have people working for it. The failure of this government is that you have used a blunt tool to create nothing except the lining of pockets of the very, very wealthy.

As Jim Stanford and the Globe and Mail and Statistics Canada and everyone else has said—and if you had listened to my speech—the worst possible thing to waste your money on is the thing that you are wasting it on in the creation of almost no employment. And as has been said, you can create six times as much employment if you give your support to unemployed and low-income people than if you give corporate tax cuts.

If you're really serious about creating jobs, do some of that—or you can create more with infrastructure investments or building housing. That's where you create jobs, not lining people's pockets, not paying huge CEO salaries. That's what Liberals are all about; that's what I reject.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

1500

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Before I make my remarks, as much as I would like to have all the time for myself,

which is 20 minutes, I'd like to advise the Chair that I will be splitting my time with the member from Davenport.

In making my remarks, my remarks are based on the document that is up for debate, which is Bill 173. It is the financial document, the budget, presented by the Minister of Finance. It is the document that speaks practically of the record of the government for the last several years as we are moving into an election this coming October. Every member on this side of the House will be going into that election on October 6 based on that record and based on this document called the budget. As in the debate on any other document, we have different views, different versions of what the real documents may be all about. But we have only one document, and here it is. It speaks for itself. It is available to any Ontarian who wants to avail herself or himself of it and look at the facts.

I have no problem going to the polls this coming October 6 based on the record of the government in the last several years and based on this document which is up for debate. I think the people of Ontario are well aware, because this is what they wanted: to preserve not only what we have accomplished on their behalf over the past several years but those things that are dear and close to their heart. Health care, education, the economy, jobs: These are the important things for the people of Ontario and the people of York West.

Through the various indexes and pages of this document, for example, on pages 47 to 97 and the various indexes, we find some information about health care. Who can complain about this: more breast cancer screening, some 90,000 screening exams for women at high risk between the ages of 30 and 49 and 50 to 69?

A first: Building a comprehensive mental health care and addiction strategy, which comes from the consultations that were held with the other members of this House. The government has been listening and agrees that something has to be done, and here it is. It's in the budget. This is a first.

We are expanding pharmacy services, including servicing our seniors using the Ontario drug benefit program. My seniors love this one here.

A dental care coverage system for all those who qualify under the age of 17; this has never been before. Now everyone can have that particular service, and it is especially addressed to low-income families. In my own riding of York West, I'm grateful for that.

We have a new family health team serving some 100,000 people, and diabetes funding, for the Black Creek Community Health Centre, which is one of 51 teams created throughout the province of Ontario. I have one in my particular area.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Yes, because of the high numbers of diabetes.

In education, again throughout this document on pages 40, 44, 83 and 91, you can find all kinds of information with respect to education. Creating some 60,000 new

student spaces in our colleges and universities is so that, for anyone who wants to attend, there will be space for them.

Starting this September, some 200 additional schools will have full-day kindergarten, benefiting some 50,000 kids. Imagine the benefit that this will accumulate to the parents of children, especially single parents. My own riding of York West, again I'm pleased and very proud, will have six new schools providing full-day kindergarten come this fall: Stanley Public School, St. Wilfrid, St. Charles Garnier, Chalkfarm Public School, Driftwood Public School and Gosford Public School.

We have heard so much about the economy and jobs. Again, on page 155 of the document, there is an outlook on jobs. There is an outlook on the economy and recovery on page 157, and on economic growth as well, from page 171 to 180.

Because of the prudent management and solid direction and action that the government has taken over the last few years, we have turned around the corner faster than any other region, including the USA. Our five-year Open Ontario plan is working, and it's working well and it's working fast, attracting investment and new jobs. Ontario's tax plan will create some 600,000 new jobs within the coming 10 years.

Our economy is growing and growing. Infrastructure investments of some \$62 billion created and preserved more than 80,000 jobs per year. This is thanks to the vision of the Premier and this government. Again, thanks to this government's response and action to the auto sector crisis, we supported some 400,000 jobs. Can you imagine supporting 400,000 jobs in the most important industry in Ontario and perhaps even in Canada? And it helped. It helped save the Ontario auto industry.

Since May 2009, our economy has been boosted with some 230,000 new jobs; that's from 2009. We have recovered—this is huge for the province of Ontario, because only a couple of years ago, we were languishing within the problem—some 91% of all the jobs lost. But what's really good, what's really important, is that 84% of those jobs that were recovered are full-time jobs. In the States, they only recovered up to 14%.

For the 2011-12 summer, some 100,000 students will have a job, because the government has initiated a program with \$22.5 million so that students will have a job.

Government actions: I have to say that we speak about those things that are dear to us. We created 18 new hospitals. One million more Ontarians have a doctor. There are 170 family health teams to serve our Ontarians better. We hired 10,700 nurses. We have reduced by 25% the cost of generic drugs. Ontario has the shortest wait times in Canada. We have expanded medical school spaces by 23%. Hospital funding has increased by 50%.

We hear so much about hydro costs, which are expensive; I have to say they're expensive, yes. But you know what? I, like everybody else, receive hydro bills. And what do we see in that hydro bill? A little line saying "Debt reduction: \$21.86"—something like that. You know what that is? It is the accumulation of some

40-plus years of Conservative governments which accumulated some \$43 billion, because Ontarians didn't pay the right amount and the government didn't do anything about it. Now, every Ontarian, every time we get a hydro bill, we have to pay that particular debt.

My time, unfortunately, is up. Otherwise, my colleague from Davenport is going to come with a piece of paper and say, "Time."

I have to say, I like this document. Anyone who wants it, it's available; I hope that we'll pass it soon and get back to work.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Member from Davenport.

**1510**

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I certainly liked what the member from York West said.

While we're having a large audience—I know that there must be a million people watching this debate—I want to especially greet and welcome those students from Oakwood Collegiate who have indicated that they're watching the budget debate today. Welcome to all of you students. To the students, I simply say to remember this: The members of the opposition parties are being paid to criticize us. That's the way the parliamentary system actually functions.

It's kind of interesting to see how they would be criticizing this budget. I want to remind you that in these notes that every party receives, essentially before the speakers get a chance to say anything, the parties and their research departments are providing what we call speaking notes.

Our speaking notes, of course, indicate what's happening in terms of this budget. You hear speaker after speaker from our party saying that this is the greatest budget that has ever been produced and you've got the opposition parties saying that this is terrible; it's a miserable failure. I heard one member say that it's irresponsible; it's even reprehensible; it's 100% wrong. You have to make up your mind—and it's an educated mind; you're in school. You have an educated mind, but you have to do some research here to see which of the parties would be able to produce the best budget for the future of Ontario. Which of these parties can you trust? Because in the end, it's a question of who you trust to produce good government in Ontario. Of course, on October 6 you have a chance to cast your ballot.

The way that we can understand how trust is being developed is by looking at the past. Everybody, all three parties, had a chance at the till of the province. Everyone had a chance to be the pilot or the captain of the ship of government. I've got so many notes here to tell you what they've done in the past. I'll just give you some examples. The NDP opposed our tax plan to create 600,000 jobs. When they were in power, 74,000 net jobs were lost—while the NDP were in power. That's an average of 1,300 people a month, and the unemployment rate averaged 10% under their government. I can go on and on. There are many pages here where we can be critical of what they produced.

For instance, the NDP, when they were in power, more than doubled the provincial debt in just five years, and they posted four straight deficits. We produced and posted three balanced budgets. The NDP opposed the McGuinty government's legislation to ban two-tier health care, voted against funding to hire more staff in long-term-care homes, and cut medical school spaces. Under the NDP, the number of nurses in Ontario fell by 3,000, and on and on. It's amazing, when you look at this, how this government could ever function for five years.

They cut student aid by almost 50%. That was the NDP. And when they were in government, they increased university and college tuition fees by almost 50%. As I say, I've got pages and pages and pages.

Let's look at the trust that we can adhere to the government in power when the PCs were in power. We have some very educated persons here, our colleagues right now, who are obviously going to react when I criticize them. What happens here is: Did that party support the municipal infrastructure partnership? Their leader said, "No. It's too much; it's too rich." The Conference Board of Canada estimated that the partnership saved 70,000 jobs. And they were against it. Under the PC government, there was no new auto investment policy in Ontario. They failed to attract a single new auto plant for the province, despite—listen to this—90 new plants being built in the US during the same time—90 new plants being built, and how many did you produce in Ontario? Do you know how many? Was it five? No. Was it four? No. It was this much.

When we came into office, of course, we produced a number of these new plants, which really means a number of new jobs. But this is only page 1. So I tell the students: What you've got to figure out, what you've got to do your research on, is what their government has done in the past. That's the best way to establish who you can trust with the till of this province; who you can trust to steer this government car in the right direction.

Listen to this one: What did the PCs do? They hid a \$5.5-billion deficit from Ontarians in their 2003 budget. That was called the Magna budget at that time. Imagine that: hiding \$5.3 billion. Some people would call that—that simply wasn't right.

Anyway, let's look. There are so many pages here that it's incredible. But it is obvious what's happening here. I can go on and be critical of what they did in the past, and the students have to make up their own minds. I have given them some of these notes that they can make up their own minds with.

What's happening in the global economy today? The Minister of Research and Innovation has already indicated what we're trying to accomplish here with the government's support. The new jobs that are being created—and the students especially are interested in this—are in financing, innovation, science and engineering, especially biotechnology. It's amazing what the new biotechnology will do. They're creating nanorobots. They're doing gene therapy. They're creating patent after patent. Imagine right now, they're thinking about having you take a pill, and while the pill goes through your blood-

stream, that pill takes photographs throughout the whole system. Isn't that wonderful when you think about it? This nanotechnology business and the idea of this new technology is really fascinating.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** But that's where the new jobs are and that's one of the things you have not understood. You have not understood the new technology and where these new jobs are coming from.

Anybody who has been in China, anybody who knows anything about the Chinese culture, anybody who knows anything about the rockets that, just three years ago, the Chinese sent into space—you know what? When those rockets were first launched, we used to laugh. "Ha, ha, ha," we said, "look at that. Look what happens to the engines over there. Look what happens to the electrical system in the rockets. Look at the propulsion system, how primitive it is. Look at the track wheels, the re-entry wheels." We laughed a lot. And who's laughing now at the Chinese? Who's laughing now? Nobody's laughing now. Within three years, they've done almost the impossible.

What I tell the students is, you've got to stay in school. When they come here, sometimes I ask the students, "Would you like to go to school on Saturday mornings? Would you like to do that? How are you going to compete globally now? How are you going to maintain the jobs? How are you going to do that? You've got to stay in school."

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** You lowered the standards in schools.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Mr. Yakabuski, you've got to tell your students that they've got to stay in school because only then are they able to compete. The new technology is a school technology. That's what's in this budget here, and that's why this budget is great. It says that 60,000 student are going to come into the university system up to 2014-15. Isn't that great? So, students, listen. We're opening up the system; we want you to stay in school.

But I asked them, "How many of you are going to stay who'd like to go to school on Saturday mornings?" I ask each class that now because I know what they do in China. In China, their students go to school—not Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, but Fridays and Saturday mornings. How are Canadian students going to compete with that kind of approach to schooling, with that kind of motivation to stay in school? Then, nobody is going to laugh any more. It is clear.

Let's take the example of India. India is graduating over 250,000 engineers a year. That's how many engineers we have in all of Canada. Imagine that. Every year, 250,000 new engineers are being graduated in India. It's almost impossible to think about those numbers.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much. I'm hoping—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I listened carefully this afternoon, and I don't hear any apologies. What I'm hearing is a lot more spending and no respect for taxpayers.

When I listened to the member from York West, a very gentlemanly person, and the member from Davenport, who I know has been to China more times than is necessary—but here's the real issue: They haven't really dealt with their problem. The Premier should say, "My name is Dalton McGuinty and I have a spending problem." He really should go to the five-step program; I'm not kidding. If you look at it right now, we're spending \$1.8 million each and every hour more than we're taking in as revenue. Let's repeat this: \$1.8 million an hour. That's so many dollars per second of red ink which eventually has to be paid back to the lenders.

**1520**

We know now the debt, which has grown from \$136 billion—and I'm looking up the number here, on page 297. The accumulated debt, all rolled in, is \$257 billion. The interest on that per year is just over \$10 billion. If you boil this down, that's the fourth-largest single item. We know now that interest is quite low. That's how they're stimulating the economy with monetary policy. Here's the real deal: If interest goes up, it's going to cost you. Say interest doubled from 1% to 2%; it would be \$20 billion.

The future is in perilous condition. They haven't even realized yet that they have a problem. They've got Don Drummond coming in. He's going to figure it out. Right after the election, they'll tell you, "Oh, we got this problem"—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I listened in particular to the member from Davenport. It strikes me that he, like the government, is trying to confuse two things. We all know that there's a variety of new technologies in the world—everyone knows that—but the McGuinty Liberal government somehow wants people to believe that new technology in the world only comes through the Liberal government.

I have to tell members, particularly the member from Davenport, that new technologies were being discovered and implemented long before any of you ever arrived here, and they'll be discovered and implemented long after you're gone. That there's any association between this government and the discovery and the advancement and the implementation of new technology is a complete fairy tale, and I think everyone across the province realizes that.

The real issue out there for people is this: People, by and large, across this province have lower incomes than they had three or four years ago. Students see tuition fees going through the roof. They see living costs going through the roof. They see housing costs going through the roof. They see a government that continues to add to those costs, whether by driving the electricity rates through the roof or with the single largest tax increase ever experienced, the HST. People want to know, since their incomes are less now than what they were three or four years ago, how are they supposed to pay more in fees, more in bills and more in taxes than ever before?

That's the question that I think this budget failed to answer and that the McGuinty Liberal government fails to answer.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I did listen very carefully to comments from my colleagues from York West and Davenport.

Of course, I take some satisfaction: The federal leader of the NDP, Mr. Layton, was quoted last week as supporting the HST in Nova Scotia, where he deemed it a progressive tax policy. One story in Nova Scotia, one in British Columbia—but we'll let people decide that.

You've got to go to a third party to get where we are. From the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association, "Manufacturers and exporters have been impacted significantly. But there are signs of greater optimism for the sector going forward. In fact, CME's forecast for the coming year is that manufacturing investment and exports will outpace GDP growth in 2011. In fact, Canada will rely on exports and business investment to sustain economic recovery. Export volumes are expected to expand 10% and machinery and equipment investments will increase by 16.5%. Ontario is once again leading the economic charge based primarily on the resiliency of our industrial and manufacturing base. Companies are adapting to rapidly changing circumstances. They are taking the necessary steps to survive and thrive in the new global reality."

Credit for the recovery is also owing to the Ontario government for taking bold steps to address the challenges that are impacting manufacturers and exporters. In particular, CME "strongly supported the HST, corporate tax rate reductions ... and the Smart program" and significant infrastructure investments and measures to encourage skills training and equipment.

That is from the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters association. Indeed, I have another document here that I'll just briefly make reference to.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** No.

Ken Lewenza, the national president of the Canadian Auto Workers, has lots of members in Peterborough. He had this to say at pre-budget submissions: "We recognize the difficult and competing pressures which the current Ontario government is attempting to balance. And while we do not endorse every decision this government has made, it is only fair to commend the positive initiatives that have been taken in many areas"—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I'm pleased to comment on the address from the members for Davenport and—is it York Centre?

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** York West.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:**—York West, speaking earlier. I just actually came into the chamber as the member for York West was finishing up, so I can't comment much on his address, but the member for Davenport seems to want to tell us what he knows about China and India as

opposed to what's actually happening in Ontario and how families are struggling in Ontario to make ends meet under this oppressive regime called the McGuinty Liberal government that wants to keep taking and taking and giving very little back.

When you talk to people on Main Street, Ontario, they are appalled at the way that this government is treating families in the province. I'll have a chance to speak to this a little later. I appreciate the indulgence of the Legislature agreeing to give me an hour, I believe, to speak on this shortly, as opposed to the usual 20 minutes. I really appreciate the government being willing to do that. I'm looking forward to having more to say shortly as they give me an hour to speak on this budget. I hope they don't change their minds, because I'm looking forward to that shortly in my opportunity.

This budget should have been about families. It was not. The McGuinty government failed. I'll tell you more about that soon.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from York West has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** To the members from Durham, Kenora–Rainy River, Peterborough and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, I'd like to thank them for their contributions to the budget document debate.

Let me say that the people of Ontario want help now. They want to have a job now. Single mothers want help now. Families want to know that they can send their kids to school and that there is space for them. They want to make sure that health care is there when they need it. These are the things that we have to look after.

I remember that when we were elected in 2003, after some of the best years in Ontario economically, we inherited a \$5-billion deficit. We paid that. We didn't cry "oul. We went on. We started to govern. We paid the debt, and here we are.

Can you imagine if we didn't protect the auto sector and let 400,000 employees, and then other thousands following that, go unprotected? I could hear the cry coming from the other side. But we did something good, something that the government had to do to protect those jobs, and we did. And do you know what? We are enjoying the fruits of that decision today because, stronger than ever, the auto sector is emerging and the workers are working, they are spending, they are paying their taxes, and we can produce other programs supporting families in need, and this is what the government should be doing.

I hope that in the end, the opposition will see the light and support the bill.

1530

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member for York West hopes we see the light. Well, I tell you, there have been switches going off high, wide and handsome on that side over the last few months as Queen's Park offices go dark because members are deciding they don't want to run for re-election. They don't want to run for re-election in Ontario because they don't agree with their own Premier. I give some of those members credit—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I give some of those members credit for saying, "Enough is enough, Premier. We're calling it quits."

But let me talk about Ontario families—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Stop the clock, please. I cannot hear the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I would ask members, please, to keep the noise level down so you can hear what he has to say, and so you can respond. Thank you.

The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I can appreciate that you can't hear me, Madam Speaker. I can't even hear myself think under the din that is coming across from those members on the opposite side. I sat here patiently listening to the members opposite give their addresses. I could only hope that I would be accorded the same.

Now, I may be mistaken, but I thought I was given unanimous consent to speak for 60 minutes and I see it's down to under 19 minutes. There is no 60 minutes? My goodness gracious, I lost out on that one.

Anyway, I talk to people on Main Street Ontario, and do you know what they ask me when I talk to people in my riding? As a matter of fact, I'm going to tell you a little bit about a meeting I had with a senior couple on the weekend, but I'll talk in general first. They ask me, "Did Premier McGuinty?"—I know I can't say Dalton McGuinty—"not think about us at all as they were drawing up this budget? Did Premier McGuinty not listen to what we've been telling him and his members sitting across there for the past several months, that we were being crushed under the burden of the load he has placed upon us?" That's what they're saying: "We are being crushed under the burden of the load placed upon us by this Premier"—this Premier. That's what they're telling me.

I don't think I live in a unique—yes, I do; I do live in a unique part of this province and represent the finest people in this province, but I don't think they're that different from so many other people in other ridings across this province. I can tell you that those members on that side of the House, those backbenchers who don't sit in the cabinet room, have to be hearing exactly the same thing when they're in their ridings on weekends. They've got to be hearing the same thing.

I'll tell you about this couple I met with for about two hours on Saturday. They were speaking for themselves, but more importantly for so many other people who are in an even more difficult position than themselves. I'm not going to use the people's names, because I didn't clear that with them.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Because it may not be true.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Oh, trust me—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The Minister of Social Services will retract that statement, please.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I retract.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I can assure my friend opposite, the Minister of Community and Social Services, that it is all very, very true—regrettable, but true.

They showed me their hydro bills, and they used some phrases I'm going to use. They talked about feeling like they were now in a police state. I said, "Explain that to me." They said, "Because we feel"—and I said, "You do have a choice." There is a choice, if you want to pay and pay. You're paying so much for hydro already. If you want to pay more and use it during peak times, so be it. You have that choice. They can't afford the bills now. Their house is electrically heated.

Last month, the hydro bill was over \$700. On that \$700 bill, the HST is \$91; the total tax is \$91. They are asking themselves, "How are we supposed to cope?"

But getting back to how they feel they're in a police state, they say, "We're being told we've got to do our laundry"—she's 80; he's just about 80. They're going to have to stay up at night to do their laundry or have to do their laundry on Saturdays, when maybe they should have the grandchildren over? They have to do their laundry in those time periods because Dalton McGuinty has prescribed that, that in his Ontario, those are the choices you have? "Follow my plan or pay through the teeth." That's how they feel.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I say to the Minister of Infrastructure over there—he's harping, saying, "Have them conserve energy." Well, if you're 80 years old and you're living at home and it's cold—and you know up in Renfrew county it's cold during the wintertime—is he suggesting they turn off the heat and freeze? What is he suggesting? It's easy to stand there or sit there and condemn them for not saving energy, but put yourself in their shoes and ask yourself what you would do. That's what I say to the members opposite.

The HST added to the cost of that hydro, the cost of home heating and the cost of gasoline—and I come from a rural area of the province. No one goes anywhere, unless it's just to your neighbour's house—and in some cases that might require driving, because depending upon where you live, your neighbour might be two miles down the road. But even if you're not in that situation, if you have to go anywhere, you have to get into a vehicle and drive. The price of gas, regardless of what it is today, is 8% more because of Premier McGuinty.

That's a burden that he decided to put on people's backs. He could have chosen not to; he could have chosen to harmonize the tax without adding 8% to hydro, 8% to gasoline and 8% to home heating. He could have done that, but he chose not to because he is hopelessly addicted to that revenue that he wants. In spite of all of that, he has a \$16.7-billion deficit. In spite of all that, he has a \$16.7-billion deficit and is on schedule to double this province's debt by 2011-12. You call that management?

Here's the interesting thing about the gas thing—I got this off the Canadian Press today. If it wasn't so painful, it would be laughable. This is what the finance minister

says: He "Warns Cutting Taxes on Gasoline Would Just Let Oil Companies Raise Prices." That's his logic for keeping taxes high on gasoline, because "If I wasn't taking your money, then the oil companies would be."

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I see the minister—I think she chuckled; I'm not sure. Maybe I could be wrong.

But can you imagine this? This is the logic of our finance minister? "I am going to keep those taxes high on gasoline because it's better that I take your money than letting those oil companies get it." He's basically accusing business—call it oil companies; we know the oil companies have lots of money. But he's basically saying, "If I don't take the money from you, they will."

But then in another part he says that he doesn't think regulating gasoline prices would make sense either. I don't agree with the regulation of gasoline prices either, but I'm not, on the other hand, going to make the preposterous statement that I have to keep the taxes up because otherwise oil companies will raise the price anyway. It's just unbelievable. Oh, and then he says—and you see too, this HST that they applied to the gasoline, when the price of oil goes up, as it has been rising over the last few months, and the price of gasoline goes up, the amount of revenue from that HST continues to go up, because it's not a fixed rate. We have 14.7 cents per litre, which they already have on gasoline—

1540

*Interjection:* A fixed amount.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** A fixed excise tax in the province of Ontario, okay? So that doesn't change. If the price of oil is \$80 a barrel or the price of oil is \$120 a barrel, whatever the pump price is, that's 14.7 cents per litre.

But when the price goes up—the HST is a sales tax. Thanks to the Premier, that Premier, that cost goes up as well, because it's floating. So if the price goes up, the amount of tax that he's collecting off that gasoline goes up as well. So why would he want to lower that tax? Because he loves the money, do you know that?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member from Peterborough says something about the federal government. Well, I'll remind him that the federal government at least gives rural communities back a portion of that gas tax, which this government has refused time and time and time again. They refuse to give rural municipalities that do not have a public transportation system a portion of that gasoline tax.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The minister says she's talking about transportation investments; she can coat it any way she wants, but they don't get a portion of the gas tax, which the federal government does give them.

Now, back to the couple I was talking about. In the budget speech you'll recall—and let's call a spade a spade: It was the most partisan budget speech ever delivered in the history of this province—ever delivered in the history of this province.

In this speech, the finance minister said—and I won't spend a lot of time looking exactly where, but it is here—that 86% of seniors have more money in their pockets or are better off—I'll paraphrase it—under the HST. I haven't run into one yet that is jumping up and down saying, "I'm really happy about the McGuinty Liberals and their HST." I haven't run into one yet. How do they get away with either inventing this or paying someone to say it, and then table it in this Legislature as some sort of a third party endorsement? It amounts to the same thing. It's a third party endorsement.

Which brings me to another item, and now that they robbed some of my time, I don't know if I'm going to be able to get to this, but talking about third parties, of course I'm talking about the Working Families Coalition—cute name; doesn't say much about what it really is. I'm looking forward to the reaction in my riding to the letter that went out from the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association informing their membership that \$60 would be taken out of their dues to be spent to try to re-elect the McGuinty Liberals—

**Mr. John O'Toole:** That's a tax.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Not only is that a tax, but quite frankly, if the rules were properly enforced, it amounts to collusion, because they are not campaigning for an ideal; they are specifically working to try to defeat one party in favour of re-electing another.

If the party opposite was guided properly, ethically, they would say, "No." They would say, "You know what you can do? You can make a donation, by choice, as a member of this union or any other, or any non-union person or other, you can make a donation by choice to the political party of your choice, and it will then be spent by that political party." But then it becomes a part of election spending. You see, what's being spent here is outside the box, so to speak. It will not be part of the election spending limits placed on all political parties during a provincial election. This is wrong.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I'm not surprised the teachers don't like you.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** The member for Oakville thinks it's funny. He says, "The teachers don't like you." Well, I can tell you that I have a brother who is a teacher and my daughter got accepted to teachers' college, and many, if not most, of the teachers in my riding supported me in the last election and probably will again. Do you know why? Because they don't believe in this.

They don't believe in their union telling them what to do with their money. And do you know what? The people—the parents who have children in school systems—don't believe in it either. They don't believe in it either, ma'am—Madam Speaker; I apologize for that—and I believe it is going to have a huge backlash, because this amounts to collusion—absolutely. And I'm looking forward to the opportunity to talk about this in my riding during the campaign. I am relishing the opportunity.

That's the kind of stuff that is going on. And if you think this stuff doesn't have its birth, its genesis, in the offices of Warren Kinsella and people like that, think

again. There are no limits to how low Mr. Kinsella will stoop when it comes to political engineering and political gamesmanship, and morals or ethics are not part of the equation. That's where this kind of stuff comes from. So I'm looking forward to that.

And ma'am—Madam Speaker; I apologize for calling you ma'am—in a truly fair system, this would not be allowed. In fact, in most other jurisdictions in this country, it is not allowed. They have strict limitations on third party spending in an election. But in Ontario—in this Ontario, where the Liberal Party is the beneficiary of that spending—they have no qualms about it. They don't see anything wrong with that. They don't see the moral wrongness of this being allowed to go on. They have no qualms. It is easy for them, because as long as it benefits them, they're going to be okay with it. It is wrong.

The government should have stood up and said no. We gave them an opportunity to ban third party advertising like this last year during the electoral system reforms. Do you think that if they were the targets of that advertising they would not have gone ahead with that ban? Of course they would have. They're self-preservationists; we understand that. But they saw this as a big win for them. They're the beneficiaries, so they want to keep this truck rolling.

It is deceitful. It is wrong for the people of Ontario. It is wrong to allow this to go on.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Aside from unparliamentary language, the member is in violation of at least three provisions of standing order 23 with the word he just uttered.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** My understanding is that he was referring not to government members but to parties outside this chamber, but I certainly advise the member to watch his language. Thank you very much.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and you're precisely correct. That's why you're the Speaker and he sits in the back row. You understand the standing orders and you're listening to the speech, not just looking for an opportunity to stick your nose in. Anyway—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** I would advise the member: He's walking a fine line.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I just want to finish up, because now I'm running short of time.

This government had a great opportunity in this budget to stand up for families in this province. It chose not to. There is not a thing in this budget to help families. There's not a thing in this budget to help seniors who are struggling to stay in their own homes under the costs being inflicted upon them by this government. They had an opportunity; they chose not to do so. Shame on them.

This is a bad budget for families in the province of Ontario, but it's the kind of budget that Liberals are fawning over. But who would be surprised? Families lose; the Liberals win.

1550

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** I listened carefully to my Conservative colleague, as I often do, because while I disagree with him on many issues, he does speak forcefully and he does speak intelligently about a number of things that were left out of this budget.

I think he is quite correct when he says that for the average person in Ontario who struggles to pay the bills, who worries about how they're going to afford to send their kids to university or college when the tuition fees keep skyrocketing through the roof, who increasingly worries about whether they're going to have job security or whether they're going to have a pension, who increasingly worries about whether they'll be able to pay the hydro bill at the end of the month—if those people were looking for something in this budget, I think for the majority of them, the answer is, "There's nothing here."

This is a budget that overwhelmingly focuses upon what I would call the corporate welfare bums of Ontario. If you're a Bay Street bank, if you're a Bay Street insurance company, the McGuinty Liberals are prepared to shower you with largesse—billions of dollars of tax cuts. But if you're the ordinary person trying to pay the bills, trying to do the right thing for your family, trying to do the right thing for your community, this is a budget that is bereft of anything that is positive and makes a contribution to people.

I marvel at government backbenchers who stand in their place and try to defend this every day. For God's sake, take a walk down the main street of communities in your riding and talk to people, and they will set you straight.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I'm pleased to make comments on the remarks by the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

He believes in magic. He believes that we can have the benefits of the 21st century at the price of the mid-20th century. That's magic. He believes that the electricity system and transmission system in Ontario will reinvent itself. That's magic. He believes that you can build and repair and maintain and construct roads for free. That's magic. He believes that you can have tomorrow's industries today with yesterday's expensive, inefficient, wasteful and dysfunctional tax system. That's magic.

If you believe in magic, the tooth fairy and the Easter Bunny, then the member's thoughts will probably resonate with you. But Ontarians live in a real world. It's the 21st century. We need a tax system that brings with it the prosperity of tomorrow in Ontario, and we have that. It's not magic; it's just good fiscal policy.

Ontarians need to know that when they turn on the switch or plug in an appliance, the electricity will be there. That didn't happen on the last, sad, sorry watch in government of the party of the member opposite, the Progressive Conservatives. Clean, affordable, sustainable electricity in Ontario is not magic. It's just sound planning and good policy.

Our kids are graduating in greater numbers. Our province has turned a corner and our people are getting

back to work. This is the budget that Ontario needs, to help families, to help students, to help seniors, to help entrepreneurs, to help job creators, and especially to help the vulnerable. Ontario needs this budget. Let's pass it.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, I believe, very passionately and succinctly made a very strong argument for what's wrong with this budget. He did mention how much is being spent per hour on the deficit. I think \$1.8 million more than they're taking in, every single hour, is being spent.

What he was really saying was, he's arguing for the families in Renfrew, or in Ontario, for that matter, that they want some respect. They want some relief.

All they've felt is the cost of energy, the cost of tuition, the cost of gas, the cost of auto insurance, the cost in your hospitals. The cost of our way of living has become onerous and unacceptable.

Ultimately, it's fine for Ron Sapsford and others getting three quarters of a million dollars a year in a year they didn't work, but how about the average family? How about the family that's waiting for long-term care, or waiting for home care, or waiting for affordable medications, or simply waiting for care? There's absolutely no respect for families in this province. It's exceeding all of the norms. In fact, Ontario, once a leader, is now being deemed to be in last place across the country.

I'm not sure how they can stand up and defend the actions of Premier McGuinty. He is a Premier who's lost his way. I think he's a very nice gentleman. I think in the first term or so he was really focused; now, he's lost his focus. He doesn't seem to care too much any more.

What I hear from my constituents is that we need a change. That time is coming, and this budget is the very first step down the hill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. He spoke in very nice language about average people and how they see a budget and how they see the impact upon them.

But I must state that I'm very disappointed by the member from Mississauga–Streetsville's characterization in his two-minute hit. He talked about magic. I remember, if you go back in history just a little, there was a guy by the name of Harry Houdini who dabbled in magic. He soon discovered that magic didn't work, but illusion was the thing that worked much better.

It is here where the Liberals have truly, truly made great strides. They believe in the illusion that the government actually does something when it does nothing. They pull all the magic rabbits out of the hat and say, "Look how good we are," but they're not because it's all an illusion.

They talk about the illusion of prosperity when there is no prosperity, when people are unemployed—places like Hamilton at 10% or Windsor at 10%. They talk about the illusion of actually building houses when they haven't

built any houses in their whole eight years, and they promised 20,000 units a year. They have the illusion that this debt of \$17 billion is magically going to go away. What an illusion that is. They have the illusion that P3s are going to work, that if you take money from the private sector, you can actually build it cheaper than if you build it yourself, which is absolutely and totally not right. What an illusion that is. Today, we learn that they have the illusion that for-profit child care in the schools is actually going to be good for you.

If anyone needs to learn about magic and about illusion, it is the member from Streetsville and the caucus around him.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. John Yakubuski:** I appreciate the input from the members from Kenora–Rainy River, Mississauga–Streetsville, Durham and Beaches–East York. I'll just quickly touch on that magic scenario from the member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

If I did believe in magic, I'd be more certain of being able to ensure that some people disappeared in October. But right about now, I'm only being fairly hopeful on it, and we're going to do our best to make sure that most of them are the ones on the other side of the House.

But he did talk about energy a little bit, and my friend from Beaches–East York talks about illusion. The illusion of doing something positive is when you see a billion dollars being costed to the ratepayers in energy for selling hydro at or below cost, or even paying people to take it away since 2006 under this government because of the energy decisions they've made—a billion dollars—throwing it away because they have no market for it, because they have all kinds of contracts that they buy hydro from even if we don't need it. That's how it works. We buy hydro even if we don't need it. That's guaranteed contracts. Sounds like a social program to me.

I want to finish by reminding people of one thing that I never got a chance to get to. Just remember, I say to the people listening today: a \$16.7-billion deficit, addiction to taxes—it's a recipe for ensuring that taxes will go up again.

They promised that taxes would not go up after the 2003 election; they came in with the biggest tax increase in Ontario's history. They promised no taxes after 2007; they brought in the HST. Mark my words: People in Ontario know that if this government is re-elected they will raise your taxes again. It's in their DNA. They can't help it. It's like the scorpion and the frog. They will raise your taxes.

1600

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** After that, I'm going to be hard-pressed to match either the volume or the passion and intensity, but I will try.

I want to start by relating what happened in my constituency office just about a week ago. I had a couple

come in. They are, shall we say, involuntarily retired. He had worked for a long time in a sawmill. He was laid off. She is working at a local department store for basically minimum wage. He is also working in a similar kind of job: minimum wage plus 10 cents, no benefits, no pension, no benefit package. If you look at their income today and compare it with their income of, say, three or four years ago, their income is substantially less.

I suppose members of the government would want to say that somebody in this situation represents a minority of Ontarians, but I would say that if I were to go to Windsor, Sarnia, Chatham, St. Thomas, London, Brantford, Hamilton, Niagara, Oshawa or anywhere across the north, and I would venture to say that if I were to go to many parts of Toronto, what I'd find is many, many more people who are in a similar or identical situation: Their income is significantly less now than it was three or four years ago. That's what these folks presented to me. They said, "We've worked hard all our lives. We've paid our taxes. We've been good citizens of the community. We've done everything that you're supposed to do. Here we are, and our income is significantly less than what it used to be." That was part of what they wanted to get across.

The other part that they wanted to get across is that they brought in their hydro bill, their heating bill and their municipal tax bill, and they pointed out that all of these things have gone up. In fact, they brought in their hydro bill from 2004. They're people who keep all their bills—2004, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011. It's not exaggeration at all to say that these people, whose income has declined, are now paying \$3,000 a year more for electricity than they paid just a few years ago; that their heating bill, because they have to heat their home with oil heat, is significantly more than what it was four or five years ago. If you add the HST on the bills, the hydro bill and the heating bill, it is even more painful. If you look at the municipal property tax, it is higher than it used to be.

I suspect that these people would look at this budget and say, "What is there here that's going to make a difference in my life?" I think if the government were honest, the government would have to say, "There's nothing in this budget that's going to make a positive difference in your life." That is the problem: At a time when more and more Ontarians are struggling to pay the bills, are struggling to make it to the end of the month, are struggling, trying to figure out, "How do we put some money away to ensure that our kids can go to college or university?" the fact of the matter is that this government is not doing anything much to help them. In fact, this government is doing lots to hurt them.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We're just putting the grants in place.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** The minister has lots to say; I invite her to stand up and speak later. But I hope somebody from the government would try to respond to these issues.

One of the things they pointed out to me, and this is what they wanted help with: They were so disturbed

about the increase in their hydro bill that they actually signed on with one of these door-to-door electricity marketers and then discovered that their hydro bill is going to go up by yet another 100%. That's what they were looking for help with: Could I help them somehow with this contract that was going to see them pay not \$400 a month for their electricity but \$800 a month for their electricity? Their point was that the fellow who came to the door said, "We're going to save you money on the hydro bill." In fact, they used the term, "We're going to give you peace of mind." That's a funny turn of phrase, to have your hydro bill go from \$400 a month to \$800 a month and call it peace of mind.

I spent some time searching in this budget to deal with that issue, because people like this who are facing a tough time are even further being ripped off by this door-to-door hydro sales pitch.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** There are new rules.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Government members say, "Oh, there are new rules." Do the new rules stop these outfits from sending people a \$50 check and then, if the people happen to endorse the check, they find out later that they're committed to a hydro contract? Do these new rules that Liberals boast about prohibit that? No, they don't. Any reasonable person would describe that as flim-flam; they'd describe it as sleazy. Do the new rules prohibit that? No.

These same rip-off companies will send somebody a prepaid credit card, saying, "Here, take this credit card." And you know what? If you use the credit card, you discover that you're now committed to an electricity contract that will double your hydro bill. Do these new rules that Liberals boast about prohibit that kind of sleazy practice, that kind of disgusting conduct? Not at all. Not at all.

Do you know what else they do? They will send you a letter—and I've had this happen to constituents. These companies send you a letter, and in the letter they say, "You have a contract for electricity with us." They actually quote your contract number and everything, and then they say, "If you renew with us, we're going to reduce your rate." And unsuspecting people, because their account number is there, think, "Holy smokes, I don't remember this but I guess maybe somehow I'm committed," and they get sucked in and they sign. Imagine that. Imagine rules and legislation that allow a company to misrepresent in that way. Is there anything in this budget that would prohibit that kind of sleazy conduct? No, and it's not in the previous legislation either. That kind of sleazy conduct continues under this government, under this budget.

I see people who struggle to pay the bills, who struggle to pay the heating bill and the hydro bill, wonder how they are going to do it. I see them being ripped off, dealing with sleazy, underhanded approaches and sleazy, underhanded dealing. Those people would look at this budget and say, "Is there something here to help me?" No, there isn't. There's the same sprinkling of Liberal promises, the same promises we have heard over and over again.

Every budget, I think, since 2003 I've heard the Liberal government say that they've got a plan to tackle poverty. The reality out there is that poverty is worse than ever. More people are falling between the cracks and more people are falling deeper between the cracks than ever before. All this government is proposing to do is more study: eight years later, more study, when the situation becomes worse and worse.

**1610**

I look at what is the single biggest piece of this government's budget direction. I say to myself: What's the budget direction? Well, the first part of the budget direction is to increase taxes on ordinary folks, and that's what the HST is. The HST is an overwhelming tax grab at the expense of modest- and middle-income people. I don't have well-to-do people coming to my constituency office complaining about the HST—for good reason. For somebody who has an income of \$150,000, \$200,000 or \$300,000 a year, the HST may mean that they pay more, but it's a minor annoyance. But for someone who has an income of \$40,000 a year, \$60,000 a year or \$70,000 a year, it is a major problem.

That's where I would say that this government is really showing its true colours. Who has it gone after in terms of raising taxes? It has gone after modest- and middle-income families—because the HST goes after them with a vengeance. It has a very minor effect on people with high incomes; it's practically not an issue for people with high incomes. But for modest- and middle-income families, this hurts them every time they pay the hydro bill, every time they pay the heating bill. They want their kids to play soccer; they want their kids to be able to play hockey; they want their kids to be able to play baseball. Every time you get one of those bills—I got it for my son the other day. "Here is what the fee is for your son to play hockey next year"—HST on top of the bill. My daughter likes to play soccer. We got the bill from the soccer association. "Here's what it is"—HST on top of the bill. My son likes to play baseball. He gets the notice from the baseball association. "Here's what it costs, and here's the HST." This is a government that, with a vengeance, has gone after low-, modest- and middle-income families, and those modest- and middle-income families are feeling the pinch.

What's the other major plank of this government's financial direction? It is to once again give Bay Street big tax cuts. I spent the last couple of weeks going through the results for all the different banks. I searched in vain to find one of the banks that needs a major tax cut. I couldn't find one. I went through all of the insurance companies looking for one that needed a major tax cut. I couldn't find one. But that is where this government is going to place a major part of its budget direction: on giving corporations who have very healthy profits even more.

I was struck to read the Statistics Canada information, because this government says, "If we give these corporations tax cuts, they'll make major investments in machinery and equipment and they'll start jobs." The StatsCan

analysis says that with all of the corporate tax cuts that we've seen, do you know what corporations have been doing with the money? They haven't been investing in machinery or equipment; they've been stuffing it in their pockets. That's Statistics Canada, an independent third party. They've been stuffing it in their pockets.

I'm trying to make sense of this. Ordinary folks, who have less income than ever before, who've seen a real decline in their income, are being hit with a major tax increase, the HST, on just about everything they do. People are seeing a major increase in their hydro bill; they're seeing door-to-door rip-off artists loosened to come after them with the most nefarious and sleazy kinds of behaviour. People increasingly have a hard time paying their bills, and this government's approach to them is to stick it to them even more.

On the other side of the ledger, you know the very people who weren't hurt by the recession, didn't see a decline in their income, didn't see a decline in their bonuses, didn't see a decline in their pocketbooks whatsoever, the minions of Bay Street, are going to get another few billion dollars of government largesse. I'm trying to figure out, how does this make any sense? How does this make any sense?

One of the realities for me is that I've been here for a while and I remember these same Liberals just a few years ago, when Mike Harris and Ernie Eves proposed corporate tax cuts. These people did somersaults to condemn them and say that corporate tax cuts were wrong. I remember just a few years ago, when George Bush was running the United States and his answer to economic problems was to cut corporate taxes, cut corporate taxes, cut corporate taxes; I remember these same Liberals doing backflips, saying, "This is stupid. This doesn't make any sense."

When Stephen Harper became Prime Minister of Canada just a few years ago and announced that his agenda was to cut corporate taxes, cut corporate taxes, I remember the Premier standing up and saying, "This is wrong. This is the wrong direction. We shouldn't be doing this." And yet, what do I see today? The same Liberals who did backflips over Mike Harris's corporate tax reductions, the same Liberals who used to sneer at George Bush, the same Premier who used to condemn Stephen Harper for his corporate tax cuts, have now joined the chorus of saying, "More corporate tax cuts."

I think the ordinary person is trying to make some sense of this. When ordinary people have less income than they had four or five years ago and see a deliberate strategy by this government to increase their tax burden through the HST and go after modest- and middle-income families with a vengeance, when modest- and middle-income families see their hydro bills skyrocketing and HST appearing on just about every kind of bill they get, they're looking for some sort of response from the government, but what they get is a government that says, "Oh, Bay Street, the banks and the finance companies need a tax reduction. The oil companies need a tax reduction."

This is crazy. This makes no sense at all. I'm sure most people, most ordinary folks, didn't read the Statistics Canada study. But when an independent body like Statistics Canada looks at all the corporate tax cuts that have been made, both federally and provincially, and says there's no evidence that it's created jobs, there's no evidence whatsoever that this has resulted in investments in plant, investments in technology or investments in machinery, but there's lots of evidence that banks and insurance companies and oil companies have simply taken the corporate tax reduction and stuck it in their pockets and used it to fund more corporate bonuses and used it to fund more corporate pay increases and used it to fund more dividends to well-off investors, I think the average person would really have some questions about this, and they ought to have some questions about this. They ought to be asking—cut through all the McGuinty Liberal rhetoric—who are they really governing for? Who are they really governing for? It certainly can't be that ordinary person out there who's struggling to pay the hydro bill, struggling to pay the heating bill and struggling to make ends meet. It can't be that person out there who's lost their job and is looking to get a new job, when all of the StatsCan evidence indicates that these corporate tax cuts are not going to result in new jobs. They're simply a transfer of financial resources from people who are already struggling to people who are already well off.

**1620**

I hope at some point one of the government members tries to provide an explanation to all this because that's what's happening. That is clearly what is happening, and I think to any reasonable person this is very clearly wrong. It's taking us in the wrong direction. It is making life more difficult for the average Ontarian. It is certainly going to result, I think, in more and more people falling through the cracks—and falling more severely through the cracks—and yet there is no evidence that this government's budgetary direction is going to do anything positive, anything progressive, for all those people across Ontario who have witnessed this spectacle over the last couple of weeks.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I thank the member for his comments. I only have two minutes to respond, so I'll spend a bit of it on his remarks relevant to the HST.

If you ask the general population—people living in any province—who is probably the one person in Canada today whom you would say is most against a tax increase of any type, most people would probably say, "Stephen Harper." But when it came to the HST in the province of Ontario, what had to happen? Stephen Harper had to sign a deal with the province of Ontario allowing us to implement the HST in this province.

What's even more interesting—and I'm not criticizing it—he signed a deal allowing Ontario to do it. If the HST is so bad for people, why would Stephen Harper, the guy most people think is the big tax fighter, sign that deal with the province of Ontario?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** And why would Stephen Harper transfer \$4.2 billion to the province of Ontario to allow them to do it? And here's the bigger one: Why would Stephen Harper, in addition to all those things, take on responsibility for 1,000 employees—the transfer of people who used to collect the provincial tax and no longer have to do it—if the HST was so bad? Stephen Harper from this day forward has taken on responsibility for the 1,000 people who used to do it in the province of Ontario. That's what he's done. That's absolutely what he's done.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Oxford.

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** At the federal level the PCs supported it, the Liberals supported it and the Bloc supported it. At the provincial level we supported it, and quite frankly we all know that the Conservatives support it, but they now oppose it. One party opposes it: the NDP. At the federal and provincial levels there is only one that opposes it. So people are going to be focused on that and talking about that.

I've only got 20 seconds left. I want to remind people in northern Ontario, in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, that in this budget the NDP voted against a \$10-million increase in the northern Ontario heritage fund, up to \$100 million, which contrasts with what they did in the last big recession when they took all \$60 million out and put in it general revenue.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I believe the compassion level and sincerity of the member for Kenora–Rainy River were certainly there. In terms of—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The Minister of Community Safety.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Through you, Madam Speaker, at least I can trust what they say. Trust becomes a very, very important part of this discussion we're having back and forth on behalf of the people of Ontario.

What I really am concerned about, though, is the lack of sincerity by the members of the McGuinty government. They refuse to listen to the facts. The facts are these: Every single hour of every single day, Premier McGuinty is spending \$1.8 million more than they're taking in in revenue.

Don Drummond is now going to do a study for them—he's a respectable man—and the study is going to say, "Here's how to fix the problem." What is the Premier doing? He's the leader. When he says "fix the problem," the rumours in the hallway are that if he's elected—I hope not; I don't wish him any harm—Premier McGuinty is going to raise the HST again.

**Interjection:** That's your rumour.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, no. I'm hearing from the pages. I'm hearing it from my constituents. So here's my—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Order.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** If not, if this is false, I want the Premier to stand up tomorrow and say, "I promise not to raise your taxes." But he said the same thing in 2003.

You can't be trusted. You lose—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John O'Toole:** No, I'm speaking for my constituents, and they've lost trust—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently, as always, to the member from Kenora–Rainy River. He talked about how ordinary people are affected. He talked about his own family. I know his children, and he talked to me about how the HST affects them: affects their hockey team, affects the baseball team, the soccer team. He also talked about ordinary people, his constituents, how they're falling through the cracks because of the HST and the lack of consumer protection around hydro scammers. They are out there. They're out there every day. They've come to my door lately, too, and they are there. They are not to be dissuaded until there is strong enough legislation.

But I also want to spend a minute on the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. He always amuses me in this place. He amuses me not because he's funny, but because he's so earnest. He is so earnest in trying to put the blame for the HST somewhere else. He's so earnest in trying to blame the federal Conservatives for the action that this government took in implementing the HST. Yes, the federal government offered a carrot, but this is the government that took it; this is the government that took this carrot.

I just find it hard to believe when a government campaigns and government members campaign and say things against the harmonizing of the sales tax in advance of the election, and the day after, the deal has already been struck. The finance minister had already had the meeting; the deal was already struck before it was announced, before the backbenchers even knew anything about it. Yet even though that was done to them, they still tried to pretend that it was okay, because this was a deal made with Stevie. "Our friend Stevie in Ottawa helped us, and he should shoulder some of the blame, too." That's the reality. That's what's really going on around here.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** First of all, I want to say to the member, he tries to imply that municipal property taxes have gone up because of this government. In fact, the facts are exactly the opposite. This government, in very difficult economic times, chose instead to continue to upload the costs which had been downloaded by the previous government on municipalities. Every municipal leader I have talked to has complimented the government on this except the member.

He also talks about the HST. I noticed that Jack Layton was in Nova Scotia praising the HST. You will

recall, Madam Speaker, that Darrell Dexter, the Premier of Nova Scotia—this is the NDP when in power, not the NDP in opposition. The NDP in Nova Scotia raised it to 15%.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** Jack loves it.

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** Of course, Jack likes that, when they raise it.

I remembered that, when in power in Saskatchewan, the NDP closed 52 rural hospitals. Now, they weren't trying to be mean to people, but they closed 52 rural hospitals. I remember Janice MacKinnon, the then Minister of Finance, saying how difficult it was. In fact, I saw her on TVO the other day. She was speaking favourably of the tax measures of this government and implying that the NDP was being political and unrealistic in their evaluation.

I remember when we were trying to assist the automotive industry. The opposition was coming from the Conservatives and from the NDP. Ken Lewenza and Buzz Hargrove said, "You're moving in the right direction." As a result of this investment, we have General Motors and Chrysler bouncing back.

I would like to recommend to the member as well one last thing: that he read the book *Minding the Public Purse* by Janice MacKinnon, the former treasurer of Saskatchewan.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Kenora–Rainy River has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Howard Hampton:** Let me respond first to the minister. This is a minister who likes to talk about everything else happening in the world except what's happening in Ontario. This is the budget of Ontario. I remind you it's people in Ontario who are hurting. I remind you it is the banks and insurance companies in Ontario that are already very profitable. They don't need another handout from the McGuinty government. When are you going to realize it's the people of Ontario that you're responsible to, not what may happen somewhere else in the globe?

**1630**

I'm actually proud of the Dexter government. They said they would take the HST off the heating bill and they said they would take the HST off the hydro bill, and, unlike Liberals, that's exactly what they did. You may find that painful, but it was the right thing to do.

I want to, just for a minute, also address the issue of property taxes. I invite the minister to go to all those municipalities where the McGuinty government says that you've stopped the downloading, that you've reversed the downloading, but they look for the money and they don't find it. I can tell you, I am getting letters from municipality after municipality in northern Ontario that say, "They told us they reversed the downloading, but when we look for the money, it's not there." That is the reality.

Finally, let me just respond to the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. It is amazing. Yes, the Harper government offered the McGuinty Liberals a deal on the HST, but the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan some-

how wants you to believe that somebody grabbed the Premier's hand and forced him to sign—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate. At the outset, I'll say I'm sharing my time with the member from Pickering–Scarborough East.

Certainly, when it's budget time, everybody seems to get selective memory. They seem to be able to draw points as they recall them. I guess that's all part of the game and part of the process and perhaps that's how it should be. I'll tell you the feedback I'm getting in my own community on this budget, given the economic times that people in my riding understand. I think they have the same concerns that I've heard expressed by all three parties today. Those concerns would be such things as health care, education, child care, children's mental health, all the things that Ontario and its citizens have become used to being concerned about when it comes to budget time. They want to see those issues either expanded upon or they want to see them managed in a responsible way. So it's a pleasure to join the debate this afternoon and just speak for a few minutes on the feedback that I'm receiving and what this budget means for my own community and what it means for other communities in the province of Ontario.

My take on the budget is that it continues the government's support of the economic recovery that we're seeing in the province when compared to other jurisdictions. When you look around the world, obviously everyone has suffered as a result of the economic downturn. It's the worst economic downturn I've seen in my lifetime, that's for sure, and I hope I never see another one. But when that happens, governments—jurisdictions—have to take into account the economic times and have to plan not only for a way to get through it but for a way to come out of it.

I think this budget is a clear indication that we've done the right things. Did we get everything right? Probably not. I don't think there has been a government in history that has got everything right every time. Have we done a good job of managing our way through the economic hard times? I'd say we have, and I think this budget brings in a renewed focus on the elimination of the deficit that I'm sure all parties in the House agree is something that we do need to deal with. I know people in my riding want it dealt with, and they want it dealt with in a strategic way and a responsible way. I think what the budget places before us is a plan that both protects our public services and yet at the same time plots a plan that allows us to reach a balanced budget.

We value our public services in Oakville—our public schools, our public health care system, our transportation system—the same way that I think anybody around the province would in any one of the communities that we all have the privilege of representing in the House today. If there's one thing that I would say that typifies this budget, it is that it's an investment in people. It's an investment in those services such as education and health

care that really typify what I think all three parties try to seek when they go out at election time and they set forward a platform for the people of Ontario.

There are some highlights that I'd like to concentrate on, but one thing that has really struck me is that often when you bring in a policy, you get a mixed reaction. You get some people who are in favour of it and some people who are opposed to it. I have to say that to date I haven't had a single parent who has a four- or five-year-old enrolled in full-day learning come up to me and say, "You know, it's not working," "I think it's a bad thing," or "I think you made a mistake." Overwhelmingly, 100% of the people that I have had any feedback from have told me that they think full-day kindergarten is one of the best things this government has ever done, that this House has ever approved. By 2014, every school in this province will have full-day learning. Now, I don't care what party you're from: That is a good thing. Parents in the province of Ontario say that that is the type of thing they want to see more investment in.

There's the creation of more than 60,000 new student spaces in Ontario's colleges and universities by 2015 so that every qualified student, everybody who's worked hard and has got the marks, is able to go on to post-secondary education. I have a fantastic post-secondary education institution in my riding of Oakville, Sheridan College. They're prepared to take more students. They want to take more students. They're training young people to take on the world. When you look at the field of animation, we've got one of the top institutions right in my community, right at Sheridan College, right here in the province of Ontario.

If you go to the other end of the age spectrum, you ask, "What's in it for seniors?" When you see the expansion in pharmacy services, something that seniors have been asking for, and support for more people under the Ontario drug benefit program, you realize that the province is trying to balance this budget, and it's trying to do things that are going to positively impact on the lives of people both young and old.

We also have—and I think all parties have spoken in support of this in the past when there was a realization that not every woman in province of Ontario who was at risk was receiving the breast cancer screening that they should. This program is something that now can be paid for and accommodated within provincial funds through the budget.

But there's one item that really stands out as a result of some work I did with members of all three parties here, and that's the funding that's been set aside for a comprehensive mental health and addictions strategy for the province of Ontario. Rightly so, and I think showing a lot of wisdom, we're starting with children and youth first. The funding is \$257 million over the next three years. It starts out this year at \$76 million, and by 2013-14 will have risen to \$93 million.

I had the pleasure of acting as Chair of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions for the province, and was able to work with members of all

parties: France Gélinas, for example, from the NDP; those from the Conservative Party, Christine Elliott and Sylvia Jones; Helena Jaczek and Jeff Leal—I'm afraid to leave anybody out here.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker: The honourable member is supposed to name people by their ridings. He hasn't named a single person by their riding, and everyone by their name. I think that's contrary—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** A warning to the member.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** That obviously is a major point, and I will stand by it.

Getting back to the major issue of children's mental health and addictions, what I was trying to do is be nice—and perhaps I won't be nice anymore—and just say I enjoyed working with members from all three parties. I won't go through each one of the ridings. I was going to. But certainly, each one of those persons, I think, despite the protestations of the member from Beaches–East York, deserves the praise and admiration of this House for the tough work that I saw each one of those people put into what is a very, very important issue to the people not only in Oakville but in the province of Ontario, and not only in southern Ontario. Certainly, the travels of the committee up to the north really drove home the point that we need to do something for children and youth in this province, that mental health and addiction issues have been ignored by all levels of government of all stripes for far too long and that it was time to start to take those steps.

Having said that, you could say there was every reason for the government not to invest in this. When you looked at the economic times, you knew we were going to have to be rational, we were going to have to be reasonable and responsible with the province's finances. But I'm very, very proud that our government chose to make those investments in these services because they're going to pay dividends in the future. It's the sort of thing that anybody, I think, would understand is a wise investment and one that should be supported. And it's just an investment; it's just a start. There has to be more to come, but the journey of a thousand miles starts with one step, and this is that one step. This is the sort of step that I think is going to really make a difference in the lives of young people.

**1640**

I've got some quotes here, one from a gentleman I've known for a long time, Ellis Katsof. Ellis is the CEO of Pathstone Mental Health. He says that this is "a significant breakthrough and a fantastic recognition of the needs of these children, youth and their families. This is the largest infusion of dollars we've had in children's mental health in probably 20 years."

Gordon Floyd, president and CEO of Children's Mental Health Ontario, says this: "The decision that this government has made to invest in child and youth mental health is a terrific decision. It's a really smart decision for families. These investments are going to help thousands

and thousands of kids who are struggling with mental health and addictions. It's going to help their families, it's going to help them succeed in life and it's going to help them succeed in school. Lots of credit to this government, not only for making a move on children's mental health but for doing it in such a big way. We haven't seen an investment like this in children's mental health services in decades; you've got to go back to the Davis government to see this kind of a move for children's mental health. I give top marks to the government."

That's the sort of quote that I think any government of any stripe would be proud of at budget time: When you've been able to invest in a strategic way in the services that are most important to people, and yet at the same time bring in a financial plan to accompany that that's reasonable, that's responsible, that is the sort of way that we would run our own households, that is the hallmark of a budget that should be supported.

I understand that it's the job of the official opposition and the third party to criticize the budget and to, I hope, propose some constructive changes. I'd like to know how it could be made better. I think it's easy to understand people when they say they're opposed to something. From time to time, I think it's incumbent on us all to tell other people what we're in favour of. I'd be looking for plans from the other two parties as to how they would change this budget in a meaningful, responsible way. I haven't heard that yet.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** Are we sharing—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Oh, sorry. The member from Pickering-Scarborough East.

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** Thank you, Speaker. I know that with the process we have, sometimes we jump into questions and comments.

Just in the few minutes I have—because many around here know that I won't be in this place after September. This will be my last budget. But I was sitting thinking today that it wasn't that long ago that my kids would come along and they'd go, "Dad, I think you've got a grey hair there." I'd deny it. After a while, I said, "I've earned every one of those, and the four of you, my children, are responsible for that." Actually, today is the birthday of my eldest daughter. She has a family of three, and two of her children are just about ready to leave high school this year and next year, as the case might be. My wife's parents are still alive, and they're up in the Bridgenorth-Peterborough area. They're in their early to mid-80s, one of whom suffers from Parkinson's. We heard the member from Brant today speaking about his brother, I believe it was. Three of our four children have family. One of them is still looking to have a family.

I want to preface my comments about the budget around my experience that way because budgets, for me, are sometimes less about the number crunch and whether there's a tax change for corporations or whether there's X number of dollars going to some program. For me, it's

about the social policy structure that I came here for, and that was to ensure, as best I could, that I can contribute to the type of quality of life and public services that people in this province should expect.

I think this budget continues to speak to those things. I think it continues to speak to them in a great variety of ways, and I'm going to take the little bit of time that's available just to speak about a couple and to highlight some of them so that I think people understand that there are initiatives being undertaken that are intended to make the conditions of this province better.

I want to speak to the intention in the budget to establish breast cancer screening exams for some 90,000 more women in high-risk areas in the age ranges of 30 to 49. It speaks to a specific need that's there in Ontario in the health area for women who are at high risk of breast cancer and doing that early screening. I think it also speaks to our objectives in ensuring we enhance and build upon the quality of health care we have in this province.

I went to my own physician just a couple of weeks ago for my—it should be annual, but often the time frame around here gets stretched, so it could have been 18 months. He suggested, after doing all the tests, that he wanted to refer me to a specialist, just as a precautionary measure—nothing specific. But nonetheless, I'm happy that we have the capacity in this province; that when I see my general practitioner on a regular or not-so-regular basis, he has the capacity to take the interest to say, "You know, at your age, I think that you should be going to see this individual, just on a precautionary basis. I don't think there's anything happening, but I want to be sure." I can get that referral in a matter of a few weeks and be able to get to see the specialist. I'm particularly proud of a province that provides that kind of health care, and I think this budget, in that way, speaks to that.

I think our budgets over the last number of years have spoken to health care in particular as one of the priority areas. I know in my own community just this past year, we completed the expansion and redevelopment of the Ajax-Pickering campus of the Rouge Valley Health System, a very significant health care provision within our community. I'm not unique in that. There are members throughout this place who have had that experience, whether it has been a new hospital or a redeveloped hospital or an expansion or new services being provided over the past seven or eight years. I think our continued investment in health care—no one in this room would disagree—is important. It's a matter of the level of priority one chooses to put on it.

On the education front, this budget will continue the investment in full-day learning, or junior kindergarten to full day. By 2014-15, I think is our time frame, we will see full-day kindergarten implemented throughout the province. It's an important step for those young people to have that capacity, that early-learning capacity, of full-day learning. It's a significant change in our education system. It will begin to do the things that the youngest of my grandchildren will be able to take advantage of when they enter the school system, and I hope it sets the stage

for them so that they will have the opportunities throughout their life to have the quality of education that is being set at that very early age.

We're looking to have additional funding for some 60,000 additional spaces in colleges and universities through to 2015. I look in my own riding and in surrounding areas that get serviced by my riding because there's not a university or college in there. I've developed connectors over the years with Durham College and the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. I see the kind of work they're doing, and the opportunities being provided. I look at their nuclear engineering program at the university level. I look at the colleges developing those technicians who can work in the nuclear industry, because the nuclear industry is important in Durham and it will continue to be important, I think, in Canada.

I also look to the other side of my riding, which I inherited at the last election: the Scarborough portion. I look at the University of Toronto Scarborough campus and their president, who comes out there to speak and talks about it being kind of the hidden jewel of the University of Toronto. It's tucked away; people don't see it as readily where it sits. It's a large facility. But for the president to be speaking about how important that campus is going to be and the investment the government has made jointly, both the provincial and federal governments, during the need for infrastructure investing, to build the new academic building that will be the largest single structure since the university started in 1967—a very, very significant change to that university campus.

I'm particularly proud of the fact that we have made the commitment at a time when it was necessary to invest in infrastructure; that we made the commitment to invest in that university, and the university in Oshawa, and the college in Oshawa and Whitby, and colleges and universities throughout this province. I think it's going to stand our young people in good stead for years to come.

I'm pleased to read here in the budget document that no qualified and keen student will be denied access to our system because of their ability to pay. It's a statement about intent. The details will have to be worked out, I'm sure. I think it's important to hear that qualified students, keen students, those who want to go on, will have that opportunity, regardless of their direct capacity to pay for it. That's an important stage for years to come.

**1650**

We have a significant deficit at this point. We, in this place, all know why that deficit is there. We've talked about the fact that we've gone through the worst recession, the cataclysmic change in the economic climate that happened in the fall of 2008. We watched our Toronto market drop 800 points in one day. It's a change we all hope we will not experience ever again, but it changed the dynamics of governments throughout the world. It changed the dynamics of government here in Ontario for an extended period of time.

But we used that, I think, as an opportunity, particularly an opportunity to invest in infrastructure, an oppor-

tunity to create jobs that were needed so desperately at that time and to put money where it could best be used to begin rebuilding the infrastructure in this province: roads and sewers and water, colleges and universities, hospitals. We made those important investments at that point in time, and I believe that will stand us in good stead in the years to come.

There is a plan to move from deficit to a balanced budget. It's a challenging plan. We're going to get there, but we're not going to get there as rapidly as most would like; probably not as rapidly as I would like. But I think it's important that we continue to make the important investments in health and education in particular, as key components of our future, to continue to make us a strong province. This budget does much of that.

I'm pleased to be able to stand in support of the 2011-12 budget. I'm pleased to have had the opportunity to participate in the budget development process for a few years—not this one—and look forward to continuation of the debate and the opportunity to vote on this budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I've listened intently to the two speakers, but I really want to speak to the statements by the member from Pickering-Scarborough East. As always, he speaks in a very balanced tone; he's not overly partisan. He is a pleasure to listen to, and I have known the member for a long time, from when we were both mayors and often had to go to similar things.

He talked about a couple of things that are near and dear to my heart: first of all, his family. It was nice to hear how well they're all progressing and how he bears them in mind.

The second thing he talked about was the University of Toronto Scarborough campus. Although I don't get a chance to go out there very much anymore, that is my alma mater and I was there in the first class of 1967 when there were, I think, some 400 students. Today, there are many, many thousands; it is an absolutely huge place. I think that governments of all stripes over the years have wisely invested in places of higher education, and certainly that is a testament to the University of Toronto—the staff, the faculty, government, students and everyone who has built that university into a first-class place to be.

Last but not least, he touched on infrastructure and how important it was for the government to have done this during the time of the recession, and I could not disagree with a single word. The only thing I can say is: Would that the government was continuing to do that, because the government did, of course, have that option and chose instead to make corporate tax cuts. I do not believe—and I'm sure the member does not believe and might want to comment—that we are going to get as many jobs created out of corporate tax cuts as we would have, had we invested that same \$3 billion in infrastructure. Certainly, municipalities could have used the money. Certainly, people would have been put to employment, and the economists tell us it would have made a lot more sense. I hope he might comment on that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It's always interesting how perceptions vary. The member from Oakville talked about the people of Oakville who thought the government was doing an okay job managing, and yet just across one broad avenue where my riding begins, the people of Oakville feel very strongly that this government has increased taxes. They may not know the figure, but they understand that this government has increased taxes by 73%, while the economy has only increased 9% or 10%, and they know that that shortfall comes out of their pockets; it comes out of their tax dollars. They know that the HST has increased their costs. It has not been a revenue-neutral thing. They know that their pockets are lighter because of the HST, and they know that this government is the cause of that. They know that their electricity bills are going through the roof. They know that they're paying twice as much for electricity today as they did seven or eight years ago, when this government took office. They know that.

I don't know whether the people north of Upper Middle Road are more attuned to politics, or whether they take a more critical view of politics, but I suspect that the people south of Upper Middle Road, all the way down to Lake Ontario, in what is referred to as the Oakville riding, are equally attuned as to what is happening to the money in their wallets. It's this government that is helping itself to a disproportionate amount of that money, which is causing the hardships of families who are desperately trying to meet their mortgages.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much for giving me an opportunity to speak about the comments that were made by the member from Oakville and the member from Pickering–Scarborough East. I really appreciated their comments about the implementation of full-day learning, and I agree with them wholeheartedly that this is one program that I keep hearing about in my riding of Ottawa Centre. Parents are very excited, grandparents are very excited, for an opportunity for their children to attend junior and senior kindergarten for a full day and to have that advantage, pedagogically speaking, to learn on a full-day basis and excel as they move on to grade 1 and beyond.

One of the important things that I notice in Bill 173 is in schedule 10, and that is an amendment to the Education Act—which I think is something we have spoken of in this Legislature before—to give school boards a choice in terms of how they provide before- and after-care for our four- and five-year-olds who may be in full-day kindergarten. Basically, what the amendment does is it gives an opportunity for boards, if they choose to do so, to have third party providers provide before- and after-care. I know, in my community and in many communities across the province, a lot of excellent not-for-profit organizations that provide before- and after-care. By making the kinds of amendments that are being proposed

in Bill 173 to the Education Act, it will allow for boards to have those third party not-for-profit providers stay and continue to provide quality, affordable, seamless before- and after-care, as recommended in the Pascal report.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments? The member from Oakville.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to thank the members from Pickering–Scarborough East, Beaches–East York—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Excuse me. We're still on questions and comments. There's one more. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Certainly. Sitting next to my colleague here—wrong seat; sorry, Madam Speaker—and the member from Pickering–Scarborough East, I was recalling when I first actually had an encounter with the member, and that was when there were these forced amalgamations taking place all across the province of Ontario. At that time, there was a debate about whether Pickering should be amalgamated with Ajax. I remember Steve Parish, the mayor of Ajax, was against amalgamation. I think our member here was on the other side of the issue.

But, you know, it was a very interesting look at that part of the province, Durham region, growing quickly—a lot of young families—and just recollecting when he talked about family and his own four children and the reality of what we do here connecting with them. Sometimes that part of Ontario, Durham region, doesn't get the attention it certainly rightfully deserves. He's tried to do that in his years here in this Legislature. In the work he has done on the finance committee and everywhere, he's made sure that we haven't forgotten about the needs of that growing part of Ontario.

Then we have the member from the other side of the GTA, in the beautiful area of Oakville–Trafalgar, and the needs that it has.

In this budget, you can see that there's been an attempt to try to deal with all the diversities of this province—

**1700**

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you. Now the member from Oakville has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Once again, my thanks to the members from Pickering–Scarborough East, Beaches–East York, Halton, Ottawa Centre and Eglinton–Lawrence, the gentleman who just spoke.

I find that the people of Ontario and certainly in my own community of Oakville are very proud people, and they're proud when we accomplish something. When we lead the way in something, they express that pride. When they hear we've got some of the lowest income tax rates in the country and we've got some of the lowest corporate tax rates not just in the country but in all of North America; when they discover that our capital city of Toronto has become a top 10 global financial centre for the first time—it's closing the gap on Chicago for number two in all of North America; when they know that our universities now are ranked as some of the top in

the entire world, our post-secondary education rate is the highest in the western world and we're the only country in the world where secondary school performances have improved over the past five years—when you look at the results and you look at the financial plan that accompanies those results, I think people in Ontario have a lot to be proud of.

And, yes, to the member from Halton, they expect that the budget will be managed in a responsible way. But they want the new hospitals, they want the new schools, they want the QEW widened—they want all the things that the member from Halton simply couldn't deliver because they didn't have a plan. Even in good times, the member from Halton was part of a government that brought in a \$5.5-billion deficit and just forgot to tell the people of Ontario.

So I think if there's a financial plan that accompanies the investment in public services, that's what the people in my community want to see and that's what the people in Ontario want to see. This is a budget that delivers that balance. It looks after the needs and the interests of people while at the same time it shows that we're good stewards of the tax dollar as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to speak to the 2011 budget, and I hope to clarify some of the erroneous facts I've been hearing from across the way in the last number of days as we speak to this budget bill.

Before I get into the part of the bill where I will put my focus, which is the risk management program, I want to take a minute to talk about schedule 1 of the bill. The explanatory note says, "Subsection 25(4) of the Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations Act currently deems a local organizing committee that hosts the annual International Plowing Match to be an agricultural society for the purposes of a tax exemption under the Retail Sales Tax Act. The tax is no longer applicable and, consequently, subsection 25(4) of the act is repealed."

The government will tell that you this is a housekeeping motion—removing a regulation that doesn't apply anymore. However, they will likely fail to mention that this is just one of the exemptions that we lost when they implemented the HST. Previously, agricultural fairs were exempt from sales tax. Now they are hit with a 13% HST. This is just one more place where the McGuinty government and their HST have increased our cost of living. Other examples include everything from hydro, gas, postage stamps, Internet, vitamins, vet bills, hotel rooms, and the list goes on.

The McGuinty government may consider getting rid of these regulations housekeeping, but Ontario families see them as another reminder that this government doesn't understand the situation they are facing—one more reminder that this tax-and-spend government is out of touch with Ontario's families. Ontario families are looking for relief, and were looking for relief in this budget. They were looking for something that would help them make ends meet. Instead, they got more of the

same: a government that is addicted to increasing spending. That means that if you are allowed to continue, there will be more tax increases. If they stay in power, the tax increases will not stop.

I want to point out that with all of that increased spending, the amount budgeted for agriculture this year is actually \$52.6 million less than the budget last year. If this government can implement the business risk management program with less money than they had allocated last year, why did they wait so long? Nothing has changed other than farmers have suffered another year and we are getting very close to the next provincial election. I think election fever may have already affected a few of the members on the opposite side of the House.

As you know, last week we had a vote on the Minister of Finance's motion. Some of the members opposite seemed a little confused as to what they were voting on, including, unfortunately, a few cabinet ministers. I want to just clarify for them that last Wednesday's vote was on whether or not the House approves in general the budgetary policy of this government. It was not, as the government claims, a vote on business risk management. Our caucus had a very clear commitment to business risk management for years. We clearly support it. What I cannot support, and what our caucus does not support, is the tax-and-spend policies of the Liberal government.

I just want to point out to the members opposite that attempts like that will not fool farmers. They will not believe them. First of all, farmers are far smarter than the McGuinty government seems to think. Secondly, we have been working with farmers in the agriculture industry on this issue for years. They know that we were standing beside them pushing the government to do the right thing and take action for Ontario's farmers. They know that the McGuinty government's proposal is an attempt to match the commitment that we made two years ago and have reiterated in this Legislature and at agriculture meetings and events numerous times since then.

I want to commend Ontario's farmers and agricultural leaders for all the work they've done to develop the risk management program. I especially want to recognize the grain and oilseed farmers for their leadership on this issue. Their work contributed greatly to the entire agricultural industry. Each sector has adopted the successful model developed by the Ontario Grains and Oilseeds to create something that would meet the needs of their farmers. I know that has not been easy. It required a huge amount of time, research and consultation.

I want to commend the members of the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition and their leadership, Don Kenny, Henry Stevens, Brian Gilroy, Wilma Jeffray, Curtis Royal, Judy Dirksen, Bette Jean Crews and Markus Wand.

Beyond the time invested in the development of the program, these farmers and agricultural organizations had the challenge of convincing the government to implement it. I know that all of these people have had multiple meetings with MPPs and the civil service, they have

written numerous letters and they have held breakfasts, lunches and dinners here at Queen's Park to talk to MPPs about the need to support Ontario's farmers.

I realize that many people may still not be familiar with business risk management. I want to take a few minutes to explain how we got here. The need for risk management programs for Ontario farmers is not new. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture has asked for a risk management program not only in this budget but in last year's budget and the budget before that.

In 2007, shortly before the last election and after several years of asking, the Grain Farmers of Ontario finally got a business risk management program. It was a three-year pilot. We all know that generally a pilot program is a test to see if the program is successful, and this one was.

So what did the McGuinty government do at the end of 2009 when the three years were up? They refused to continue the program. On December 8, 2009, the Grain Farmers of Ontario came to Queen's Park for a breakfast. All through the minister's remarks, I know they kept waiting for the announcement. So did I. But she didn't make one. She thanked them for working with her, said positive things about the program and then sat down and let the program expire. When farmers needed stability and predictability, the McGuinty government kept telling them that they couldn't continue the program without federal support.

Farmers had to make planting decisions and get operating loans without knowing whether they had a program in place. A program that requires farmers to beg for an extension each year is neither predictable nor bankable.

At the end of July 2010, the government finally announced that they would extend the program for the 2010 crop year, but at the end of that year, once again, farmers were left not knowing whether they had the protection of a business risk management program. So once again, the grain farmers came to Queen's Park to hold a breakfast, and once again, they left still waiting for the announcement.

At the same time as grain farmers were fighting for their extensions, other Ontario farmers were fighting to hold on to their farms. Many sectors were experiencing high input cost and low market prices. Pork and beef farmers were facing long downturns in the market that meant they couldn't qualify for support under Agri-Stability. Since 2007, Ontario's productive sow herds have declined by over 20%.

During the recent pre-budget hearings, we heard about the impact the losses had in the livestock sector. At least one feed mill has already closed. There have been layoffs in the Burlington processing plant. Several transport companies have closed or been sold. Farm animal veterinarians have merged practices or switched to pet care.

I want to thank all the farmers and agricultural leaders who worked with Tim Hudak and me during the time and shared their information.

#### 1710

In September 2009, at the International Plowing Match in Earlton, Tim Hudak committed that one of the priorities of a PC government would be working with industry to develop a smart risk management system for sectors that do not have supply management.

Since that time, at the International Plowing Match in St. Thomas, the fruit and vegetable growers' convention in St. Catharines, the grain farmers' convention in London, the cattlemen's AGM in Mississauga and in meetings with farmers across the province, Tim Hudak has reiterated that support for business risk management over and over.

In 2009, around the same time that Tim made the commitment at the plowing match, agriculture sectors recognized the need to work together and present one unified voice in support of risk management. So eight of the largest non-supply-managed commodity groups joined together to form the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition, and I want to commend them for doing that.

Unfortunately, even with all the sectors working together, they couldn't immediately convince the McGuinty government that there was a need and a responsibility to Ontario's farmers. As the member from Durham said in his statement supporting business risk management on February 16, 2010, the government was "so busy struggling with its debt and tax controversies that it doesn't have enough time to recognize agriculture."

On March 5, 2010, over a year ago, the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition wrote to Premier McGuinty. The letter said in part:

"Ontario farmers need an immediate commitment from your government to provide the provincial investment needed to stabilize and sustain our businesses. This commitment cannot hinge on federal support being given first.

"We understand the necessity of securing a federal commitment, but without a tangible expression from your government over the next few weeks farms will be lost. We continue to be caught between the rhetoric of both levels of government. Ontario farmers deserve and need better than this and are depending on you and your government to stand up for Ontario agriculture at this critical time."

Farmers didn't ask this government to delay and wait for the federal support. Farmers wanted the support of both levels of government, but they didn't want to wait for two years. They knew the impact that that would have. They warned the government over a year ago that delaying would mean the loss of more farmers.

On March 31 last year, when we asked the Minister of Agriculture to implement the business risk management program, she instead responded by boasting about an extra \$150 million that her ministry received in the 2010 budget. And \$150 million may sound familiar. It's the amount the government claims to have allocated to implement the program this year. So once again, we are

left to wonder why farmers had to suffer through another year of losses before this program was announced. Remember, she had the \$150 million in last year's budget. Was it that they just weren't close enough to an election yet? Apparently they didn't need legislation, and they have figured out that the action, or lack of action, by another level of government does nothing to change the responsibility they have for Ontario's farmers.

On April 6, 2010, the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition held a large town hall meeting in Stratford to demonstrate support for the business risk management program. In spite of the hundreds of farmers who showed up, the McGuinty government didn't take any action to help them. At Queen's Park, they continued to press the McGuinty government to implement the program.

On June 3, 2010, my colleague the member from Simcoe-Grey brought forward a resolution which called on the provincial government, regardless of any other level of government, to immediately implement a business risk management program. This resolution was not about letting other governments off the hook; it was about getting Ontario to do their part for our farmers. But the McGuinty government voted down the resolution on business risk management.

For those members who were confused the day we passed that other motion, the resolution was the real vote on business risk management, and every member on the McGuinty side voted for that motion.

The following day, the Ontario cattlemen issued a news release which said: "The Ontario Cattlemen's Association is thankful for the support shown in the Ontario Legislature yesterday for agriculture in this province. A resolution from Jim Wilson, PC member of provincial Parliament for the riding of Simcoe-Grey, was debated during the afternoon, but was ultimately defeated. The resolution sought a commitment from the government of Ontario in support of reforms to the national Agri-Stability program and for a premium-based business risk management program to ease the financial burden being felt by so many farmers in Ontario.

"In 2009, Ontario agriculture's net income was in the red by \$50 million, a loss that is projected to be 10 times greater—half a billion dollars—by 2010. Without feasible risk management programming, the future of industry in Ontario is uncertain.

"It is no secret that Ontario agriculture is facing very serious economic conditions," says OCA president Curtis Royal. "Figures recently released by Statistics Canada indicate that there is a continuing decline and a financial crisis that is much more severe than government had previously acknowledged. Despite the resolution having been defeated, Mr. Wilson has done well to make all MPPs, whether they're urban or rural, realize how dire the situation is, and we thank him for that."

"Agricultural groups have been trying for months to get the point across that there is more at risk than Ontario's farmers and the 80,000 jobs they provide in the province. There are also spin-off jobs affected, like those

in processing and further processing of Ontario's food products. This number is estimated to exceed 600,000 jobs."

That's the end of the quote. That's the letter from the cattlemen of Ontario.

A few weeks later, following the federal-provincial-territorial meetings that produced no tangible results, the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition sent out a news release that said, "Until the FPT ministers decide on adopting predictable and bankable programs nationally the OASC is calling on Ontario Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Mitchell to step up and invest in Ontario's farmers by funding the programs developed here in Ontario without waiting for the federal government to act."

That release was on July 14, 2010, almost nine months ago. I want to be clear: I hope that in time this will become a fully funded program with support from both levels of government. However, the action or lack of action on the part of other levels of government does not release the province of Ontario from the responsibility of supporting our farmers. We believed, and we continue to believe, that our first priority as Ontario politicians is to ensure that Ontario is helping our farmers.

Over the summer and into the fall, we continued to work with farmers and farm leaders to press the McGuinty government to implement a business risk management program based on the cost of production. Again, I want to thank the agricultural organizations for working with us and for all the information they have provided.

On December 1, 2010, I was pleased to attend the Farmers Matter town hall in Stratford, where more than 800 farmers came out to demonstrate their need for support and to work together to develop a solution. Tim Hudak and I met with the organizers of Farmers Matter and listened to their concerns. We were proud to stand with them and once again call on the McGuinty government for their share of a business risk management program. I wish the Minister of Agriculture could have been there to see and hear directly from the farmers. All farm leaders wanted for Christmas was a business risk management program, but again they were disappointed. During pre-budget consultations, agricultural organizations were clear that this was their number one priority.

A few weeks ago, Tim Hudak spoke to the Ontario Cattlemen's Association annual meeting and reiterated our commitment to working with farmers and to business risk management. They released their annual report at the meeting and called for the Ontario government "to act immediately and unilaterally to kick-start and fund their share of the program."

Due to the limited time, I can't mention all the other work that farmers and their agricultural organizations have done to get to this point, but I think that everyone recognized this was a huge effort on their part. Though they are pleased, I know that many of them are asking why we couldn't have done this sooner. In fact, I asked the minister this morning and she couldn't provide an answer.

Nothing has changed between now and 2009 when the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition was formed, other than that we have lost more farmers, more young people rejected agriculture as a career because it wasn't viable and this government put our farmers through unnecessary suffering.

Over this time, numerous farmers have called or written because they don't know what to do. They can't afford to pay their debts. They've lost faith in government to help them. Some Ontario farmers are relying on the food bank to feed their families. Two weeks ago, the former parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture right here in this Legislature asked why the government could not have implemented this program sooner. The minister was quick to boast about the program but she didn't answer the question.

1720

Minister, let me assure you, farmers who have spent the last two years trying to hold on to their farm would like an answer. I hope that the McGuinty government has finally made this commitment because of the hard work of farmers and agriculture farm organizations, and because it is the right thing to do. But unfortunately, I fear it may be more to do with the fact that we are less than 200 days from an election.

I want to commend the farmers and farm organizations for their hard work, dedication and perseverance. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure this program is implemented as promised and that farmers get a permanent business risk management program that works for them. I want to thank you for allowing me to speak to the budget and particularly that part that deals with looking after our agriculture community in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened again intently to the member from Oxford. He brings a lot of experience to this House, a lot of municipal experience, but also experience that he relays—but probably not often enough—about the farming community.

As a person who has spent literally his whole life in the city, I welcome this intervention, when he speaks, to know about the troubles, the travails of our farming community, because even those of us like me who've lived their whole life in the city understand where their food comes from and the people who work so very hard to produce it.

As I listened to him, I must commend him for his steadfast support of farmers and farming organizations. He is right to contend that we should have done this a long time ago. But I also have to state that I am thankful that the government has seen fit to do so in this budget.

As I said earlier, there are two shining things in the budget which I think we can all take some pride in, and extending the management system to the farmers is one of them. I thank him for what he had to say here today, but I also have to thank the government for including this item in the budget.

Our farmers deserve the utmost of respect. They deserve to be listened to. They deserve that members of all parties take their concerns very seriously, that we strive to make sure that they have successful organizations and that it is in fact a successful place to do business here in Ontario.

I would be remiss if I didn't talk about those who work for farmers as well, and I am looking forward to the government doing equally good things some day to recognize the farm labourers, mostly who are brought from offshore, and to help them to unionize so they can have safer and better places in which to work. When the government does that, they will have closed the full circle and I can truly thank them.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Just a couple of minutes to respond to my good friend from Oxford. I'll say up front I sometimes do like what the member from Oxford has to say, but what he said today, I think it questions in fact the integrity.

One of the things that he did say was, "Why didn't the government do it sooner?" He's quite right. Why didn't the government do it sooner? I remember the days of the BSE crisis. Why didn't they do it? He's right. It should have been done sooner, because I represent rural communities. I know that when I was mayor of Brighton he closed, while he was minister, the agricultural office in my own community. He closed one in Peterborough. Then he stands here today—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** He was there; he should remember. He closed them. So I would question when he says that he did this—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I must have touched a sour note.

All I'm saying is yes, this should have been done sooner. Nobody disagrees. But they were in government for eight years. He was a Minister of Agriculture when they destroyed agriculture. Where was he? He should tell that to this House. So it's kind of, that was yesterday, this is today. Well, today, the member from Oxford should know that we did it.

I do commend the farmers, not only from my riding but all of the sector, as I was a PA to the Minister of Agriculture for some three years. I met with all those sectors. We let them work on their own to come up with their own program. It wasn't one of those things handed down by government. We worked with them, we didn't work against them, and today it is a bit rich for them to take that kind of credit.

We're here because I know how important the farming community is to this province. Yes, they're not large in numbers of votes like in urban centres, but they're citizens of our province that produce the best food and the best quality of food that this province or any part of the world could have. So we should be able to support them, but not under that rhetoric.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I do appreciate the opportunity to make a few comments on the remarks made by my colleague the member from Oxford with respect to the budget bill, Bill 173, specifically with respect to the inclusion of the business risk management program. Of course, we do recognize it as a positive element in a budget that's otherwise not very good for Ontario families, to say the very least. I think that my colleague did a great job—and has for many years—of advocating for the agricultural community and of setting out today the truth about the history that led to the announcement that was made in the budget.

I also would like to thank Ontario farmers and the work of the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition for bringing this to the table, because the reality is that we've all known for a long time that this has been needed, and I suspect that the reason why it's being brought forward today is really more a matter of the fact that it's an election year, rather than knowing and understanding the plight of Ontario's farmers and how difficult it has been for many Ontario farmers for many years.

What is surprising to some people when I speak about this is that my riding of Whitby–Ajax—Whitby–Oshawa; it was then Whitby–Ajax—has a large agricultural component to it, particularly in the northern part of the riding. I do have the opportunity on several occasions—in fact, when the Brooklin Spring Fair comes up in June, we normally have a breakfast where we have a round table with the federal member and with myself as the provincial member to talk about some of these issues. It's a mixed farming community, from grain and oilseed farmers to dairy farmers, beef farmers and everything else in between. They have talked to us in detail for a number of years about the issues that they've been facing, so I'm glad that something finally has been done, but really, it has been long overdue. So I really am glad that my colleague the member from Oxford has been raising these issues and will continue to do so in this Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I certainly also want to add my comments to this debate. I want to, first of all, remind the member from Oxford, when he was Minister of Agriculture, of the things that happened. I know that the member from Northumberland–Quinte West has already talked about what happened in terms of our county offices.

I also want to remind the member that in the first five years of the Conservative government, we lost 1,000 farmers a year—1,000 farm families a year—because of the policies of your government. As parents, we discouraged our children, our sons and our daughters, from getting into the industry. There was no hope there for them. We wanted to have them take over our farms but it wasn't even possible.

I want to caution the member that he may put his shoulder out of joint by patting himself and his leader on the back. There is an opportunity here for you to earn

some credit in all of this, and that is to go to your federal cousins and start talking to them about participating in this program. Do you understand that the program that is now funded at \$150 million will grow to \$375 million with federal participation? Do you know what farmers can do with \$375 million of predictability, stability and bankability? Incredible things. That's the kind of thing that you can do to help the farmers. There's your opportunity, member from Oxford. Go to the federal members. Talk to them about supporting this program and putting their 60% in, because that's what we need.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Oxford has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'd like to thank the members from Beaches–East York, Northumberland–Quinte West, Whitby–Oshawa and Lambton–Kent–Middlesex for their kind comments. I find it interesting that they had to go back a long way to find anything to say that was negative and not to comment about what I mentioned today.

I just want to point out that I have here the Ontario Farmer that arrived today. I'm sure the members opposite haven't seen it yet, but it points out the timelines, as I mentioned, in the budget and the fact that in this program, the wait was not because it wasn't ready; the first phase of the program was announced just before the last election in 2007, for the years 2007, 2008 and 2009. Then, of course, it ended, and then they reinstated it for the year 2010. When it was suggested to the minister that maybe this was done because of an election year, Minister Mitchell bristled at the suggestion that the program was finally announced as a permanent program because it was an election year. Then she said it was because this was the first opportunity she had to implement it.

**1730**

I just want to point out that in this bill that we're having the discussion about today—it's fair to say that somebody could have called me to order, if the Speaker had seen fit to do so, because there is not a single mention of the agriculture risk management program in the bill we're debating today because this program does not require legislation. The minister had the power, the ability and the money in the budget to have done it in the last five years. Each year, she had taken the money, putting it in another budget, and she had refused to implement this program until an election was called.

I want to point out that I support this program 100%, and I thank the minister for putting it in this budget, but she could have done it a long—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you.

Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there has been more than six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader indicates otherwise.

**Hon. Christopher Bentley:** We would like the debate to continue.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** At the outset, I want to say that I'll be sharing half of my time with the member from Eglinton-Lawrence.

This has been an interesting discussion this afternoon, particularly the remarks from the member from Oxford. I think it's time that we got the record straight. Two years ago, exactly two years ago, a group of cattle farmers in my riding came together, and I can provide you with the names. Mr. Edgar Cornish, Mr. Jack Holland, Mr. Wayne Telford, Mr. Allan Kidd and Mr. John Lunn came together as a group. They met at Edgar Cornish's farm, which is on Highway 7 East, just outside of the city of Peterborough. They came together to develop a model for a risk management program for their specific industry, which was the cattle industry.

Mr. Cornish did extensive research from around the world. He looked at various models that he thought were applicable in the province of Ontario. Indeed, these individuals came up with a plan, a risk management plan, two years ago. It wasn't the member from Oxford. It was a grassroots organization right in Peterborough that came together—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** He's been trying to take credit for it, but he has no credit at all in this issue.

They came together; they developed a plan. These six individuals then took this plan to every respective cattlemen's association across the province of Ontario to garner support and explain the plan. After that process was completed, cattlemen's associations across Ontario came together and they took this plan to the Ontario Cattlemen's Association for review and approval.

At the very same time, the now Minister of Education, then Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, brought together the coalition, which was the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, the sheep farmers, the pork farmers, the grains and oilseeds and the fruits and vegetables group, to come together in unison.

So what we had here was this group in Peterborough that forged the model, took it on the road and got support in every back concession in the province of Ontario. Indeed, we were so pleased that it was announced in this recent budget. In fact, the Minister of Agriculture, Carol Mitchell, came to my riding last Tuesday to thank those six individuals who developed this model for a risk management program in the province of Ontario. We now refer to these people across Ontario as the incredible six. So they're the ones who should get credit for developing this model.

They spent countless hours at their kitchen table. They looked at the model, they revised the model, they added to the model, and finally, they got it to a position where it was universally accepted by their umbrella organization, the Ontario Cattlemen's Association. So I think it's most appropriate that we give credit where credit is due. I can say one thing about the current Minister of Agriculture: She's never had the nickname of "padlock" Minister of Agriculture of the province of Ontario. That padlock Minister of Agriculture closed agriculture offices right

across this province, in Brighton and Peterborough, and the list goes on and on and on.

Interestingly enough, there was an article that was written in the Guelph Mercury on April 4, 2011, by a gentleman by the name of Owen Roberts. I just want to quote a couple of sections from it. It says:

"On budget day, they received from the provincial government a \$150-million permanent risk management program, an insurance plan they describe as a 'self-directed, cost-shared farmer-designed program that will help them through the market's ups and downs.'

"There's still no federal help, given that there's no federal government. But the pressure was on the province to come through, with spring planting around the corner and farmers feeling they'd waited long enough. The timing for this program was excellent, and the thanks from farmers has been profuse.

"'Ontario grain farmers should celebrate (this) news,' said Don Kenny, chair of the Guelph-based Grain Farmers of Ontario, adding that the McGuinty government's leadership 'sets a new standard in the province and ensures the stability of our family farms.' Bette Jean Crews"—she is a wonderful individual; she hails from the great riding of Northumberland-Quinte West—"chair of the Ontario Agriculture Sustainability Coalition, said establishing the program 'was the single most important action the provincial government could have taken in the budget.'

"Curtis Royal, president of the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, called the announcement great news for Ontario farmers, rural communities and everyone involved in agriculture and agri-food."

**Interjection:** He's straight up as they come, Curtis.

**Mr. Jeff Leal:** I'll say.

"It will give our farmers the tools they need to sustain their operations so they can continue to provide high quality, locally grown food to Ontario consumers,' he said.

"And Wilma Jeffray"—a lot of people around here know Wilma; lovely lady—"chair of Ontario Pork, said the fact that the province took action during tough fiscal times and without the participation of the federal government 'makes this announcement that much more significant to Ontario farmers.'

"The only people who won't be celebrating this plan are federal Conservatives campaigning in rural Ontario. Why didn't Ottawa get behind a program that was so needed and desired by farmers in the province? Good question."

This is from Owen Roberts.

It's very interesting. There's a lot of chit-chat here this afternoon about the federal government and the lack of participation. We know for a fact that the current Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the previous Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, at several of the federal-provincial tables where they come together to discuss these issues, made pleas to the federal government that they should be supporting a risk management program in the province of Ontario. They

said that the agricultural base in each province in this great Dominion is slightly different and there should be customized programs to meet local provincial needs.

Those two ministers, in the past, in very eloquent and articulate terms, made the plea to the current minister, Minister Ritz, to have Ottawa participate in a risk management program so it would fit the needs of Ontario's farmers. The position of the federal government was refusal, refusal, refusal. They indicated that they couldn't participate in a customized provincial program because of WTO. That's interesting, because the magnificent six I just described to you did extensive research on the legal aspects of the WTO. As long as the program is for domestic agriculture in the province only, it won't be subject to a WTO challenge. It's interesting. The federal government should have known that, that it wouldn't be subject to a WTO challenge.

Since 1976, the province of Quebec, through the AZERA program, has always had customized programs suited to farmers in the province. So it seems to me that if the federal governments were allowing customized programs in the province of Quebec, surely they could allow for a customized program in the province of Ontario.

**1740**

But it's the continued position of federal governments—and Liberal governments have been included in there—that they often take Ontario for granted. Nobody should take Ontario for granted. This was a unique opportunity over the last number of years for the governments of Canada, both Liberal and Conservative, to come to the table and come up with a program customized for farmers in Ontario in the non-supply-managed sector to support a risk management program, because we know—you know, Madam Speaker, and I know—that after BSE hit in 2003, the price of cattle just tanked. Farmers in the cattle industry and increasingly in the pork industry had been using up an increasing amount of their equity to sustain their operations. Frankly, they were getting into a deep crisis. As they were using up their equity, they had no insurance program that they could take to the financial institutions to provide the banking on a year-to-year basis to sustain their agricultural operation. That's one of the reasons why there's been a significant decline in both the pork industry and the beef industry in the province of Ontario.

This budget, as I think a number of commentators have said, was probably the most significant announcement for agriculture in Ontario in probably 40 years. Some people said that it was the greatest announcement since, I believe, former Agriculture Minister Eugene Whelan brought in the supply-managed system to agriculture in Canada, which has been a godsend. It provides great prices, controls production and allows our farmers to thrive.

I'll turn it over to my good friend the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Actually, I think it's very healthy for this Legislature to be spending so much time on the

importance of the agricultural sector in the province of Ontario. As you know, although I represent a riding right in the middle of Toronto, it is a good reminder of the critical importance that our agricultural families have to the economic vitality, the health and the future of protecting valuable farmland. Sometimes, we're so busy looking at new technology and the new innovations taking place that we forget the on-the-ground contributions that our farm families make across this province.

I totally support the investment that our government has made, because if the agricultural sector is strong, I think this province is strong. It's a very good reminder for us to keep that in mind. It's something that I think we should pass on to our younger people, our students and so forth, because I think they sometimes haven't had the opportunity to reflect on the critical contributions that the agricultural sector makes to the future well-being of this province.

I just want to put in some comments about some of the issues that this budget deals with in terms of the city and the riding of Eglinton–Lawrence, which I represent. In many ways, it really represents some of the sort of silent, hidden issues that are in all our communities. I know I have a wonderful organization in Eglinton–Lawrence called Delisle Youth Services. Delisle Youth Services has been in operation since 1972. What it does is it quietly and effectively reaches out to young people who are having issues in terms of their ability to cope with everyday life—sometimes, I guess, it's severe depression—a lot of challenging day-to-day things for young people.

Delisle Youth Services has been going into all of our schools, like North Toronto, Northern Secondary School and Lawrence Park. It offers counselling services, it offers advice, it offers support to the family and to the students. Just recently, through a Trillium grant, they were able to open up a new ground-floor drop-in centre for the youth in the middle of the city at Yonge and Eglinton. This budget certainly reflects on the work that Delisle Youth Services does, and that is the investment in our young people, supporting them through their mental health challenges.

In fact, I was at a meeting earlier today. The two people I was meeting with—we were discussing investments in mental health. Each one of us knew of someone in our family that had an issue with mental health. That was just out of three people. It's an issue we have not, I think, been aggressive enough on. It's sort of been something that's had a stigma attached, and luckily, we're beginning to talk about it openly.

I know when I go to speak at my high schools or grade schools—especially the high schools—on Fridays, I do mention the importance of being very, very sensitive to the needs of fellow students or our friends and family who have these issues. So this is what this budget does in terms of my community: It makes that investment in that critical area of health, mental health, which is a silent disability.

Also, this budget continues to invest in another critical area in my riding, and that is the area of public transit.

For many years, we've been eagerly awaiting the restart of the rapid transit line on Eglinton Avenue West. In 1995, I was just elected, I think, at that time, and I had just come off from being a Metro councillor and TTC chairman, and we had started the building of the Eglinton subway. To build a full bore subway from Pearson to Bathurst Street was going to cost us about \$800 million. Then, as soon as the election of Mike Harris occurred, they decided to cancel the subway.

So 16 years later we're continuing, or we are restarting, that investment in public transit. For 16 years we've waited with bated breath, dealing with bumper-to-bumper buses, diesel buses, going up and down our streets in our community. The buses can't move because there are just so many cars on Eglinton Avenue. You can go there on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and there are cars that are not moving from Bathurst all the way to Keele Street. This has been going on for 16 years. It didn't have to happen.

But luckily, through this budget, a portion of the money in this budget will go toward restarting the rapid transit on Eglinton Avenue that will eventually go all the way to Scarborough City Centre. So that is very, very important—not only the building of the new line but also funding the ongoing transit needs of the city of Toronto through the gas tax, where 50% of the gas tax goes to funding; 50% of the provincial gas tax goes to the city of Toronto, because it's based on ridership and we have the most ridership. So that's continuing. It has to continue.

I think our government has given over \$860 million to the city of Toronto for gas tax since its inception. That has to continue, because it's not only helping transit riders; this is helping our city's mobility. When the city is immobile, it is extremely cost-prohibitive. It's estimated by the Toronto Board of Trade that basically we could lose anywhere from—I've heard various figures—\$2 billion to \$6 billion a year in congestion. That is getting food, getting products, getting people to work, extra time in their cars, more gasoline costs, more time to make deliveries of products. Billions of dollars have been lost because of congestion. We have to continue to make investments in public transit, as this budget does.

In our schools, I would say that I am blessed. I have some of the best schools, I think, anywhere in Canada, whether it be Allenby school or whether it be John Ross Robertson, whether it be Blessed Sacrament school or whether it be Lawrence Park or Dante Alighieri school. So this budget continues to invest in these excellent schools and teachers that are continuing to excel. The elementary schools, as I've said, their test scores are coming up. Parents are happy with the investment that we're making and continuing to make in our schools. We sometimes forget that that is critically important.

**1750**

Also, the continuing uploading that is going on in ambulance services, ODSP and all the social services—that uploading from municipalities back up to the province is continuing in this budget. Those of you who were here when there was massive downloading will know how important that is to maintaining our viable towns and

cities in the city of Toronto. That uploading is continuing in this budget.

I also want to mention that the investment in public health is continuing. Not enough is said about our community health centres in this Legislature. I know I have two of the finest health centres anywhere in my riding. I've got Baycrest hospital, which is one of the best hospitals for cognitive impairment, it's a retirement home etc. It's fantastic. I also have the Anne Johnston community health centre, where their mandate is the barrier-free mandate to make sure that people with mobility problems are given health care. They take care of people right across the city of Toronto with mobility problems. They now have two full-time nurse practitioners—they're fantastic—they have three doctors, they have podiatrists, they've got a dentistry office downstairs to provide dental care, all in the Anne Johnston health centre. Also, I have the Unison health centre, which was formerly called the Lawrence Heights Community Health Centre, in the western part of my riding, which does incredible work on diabetes, for instance.

These are critical, vital community assets that continue to be funded in this budget, and that is something I applaud the Minister of Finance for continuing to do.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** There's a lot that I could say that's negative about this budget, and certainly the negatives far outweigh the positives, but we're nearing the end of our debate for the day on Bill 173, the budget bill, so I thought I'd like to end it on a positive note and commend the government for coming forward, particularly with, as the member from Eglinton–Lawrence spoke about, committing money to improving mental health and addiction services in Ontario, particularly for children.

He mentioned some of the work that was being done—I believe it was Delisle Youth Services. That's happening across our province, but we certainly need to augment the support for children and youth particularly because there's a serious crisis that's going on with a lot of our children in our schools. There's a lot of good work that's being done, but they need to have the resources in order to be able to continue their good work.

I actually had on my desk today a report that's been done by the Thames Valley District School Board which is called Understand Me: A Strategic Plan for Improving Mental Health and Supporting Students with Mental Health Problems in the Thames Valley District School Board for 2010 to 2015. This is some really groundbreaking work that's being done in our schools, and I hope that some of the money that's being allocated through the budget to mental health programs and services will spend time looking at some of this, too, for early identification and early treatment for children and youth, in order to avoid some of the problems that we're seeing with youth later on.

There was also a very sad story in the newspaper today about the problems with suicide on some of our university campuses. Queen's University had a sym-

posium just this past weekend about the recent rash of suicides. We need to really spend time and energy on developing programs to prevent this needless loss of life, and that's what we're going to be looking for.

The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care did promise to produce a report on how the strategy is going to be developed by mid-May or thereabouts, so we're certainly going to be looking to that to make sure that the money is being spent where it's absolutely needed to support some of this great work that's being done.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to both speakers, the one from Peterborough and the one from Eglinton–Lawrence. In the two minutes, I only have time to comment on one, and that's the member from Eglinton–Lawrence. He is trying to state, in a roundabout way, that this budget somehow involves the building of public transit in Toronto. I will acknowledge that the government did put some money aside in previous budgets, then withdrew it and slowed down the time frame by some four years, did a number of things and then allowed some of the money to trickle forward. We all know that's true.

I am appalled, really, at why the government has caved in to the pressures of Rob Ford and his minions at city hall. I am appalled that the Premier continues to play that game.

One of the things that's being done is the whole wasteful plan of digging almost the entire Eglinton LRT, or Eglinton right-of-way system, wasting all of the money. Although it might be good for Eglinton—it might be good for the member's riding—it will ensure quite horribly that the people who live along the Finch corridor are not going to get what they require in terms of the LRT, and that the dirty diesel buses will continue along there. It will almost assuredly make it impossible for the Sheppard line to be built, save and except if some people—magically, out of a hat—come forward to fund that in a private sector donation. That almost assuredly is not going to happen.

What we have is this government that put forward money in good faith, albeit they withdrew some of it or held some of it back, playing a game that is not going to do for the city of Toronto what all the experts say that we need. It's a very sad day, not a good day, as the member has described.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I think the comments of the two speakers presented a good contrast. I think it speaks well of the budget. The member from Peterborough focused mainly on ideas and issues contained within the budget that would impact on the rural community. The member from Eglinton–Lawrence focused primarily on those issues that would impact on the urban setting, which I am more familiar with, obviously. But I'm developing and have developed over the years a huge appreciation for the rural community and for the agricultural community, knowing how important it is not

only to the lifestyle and to what ends up on my dining room table but also to the economy of this province.

I think, once again, this speaks to the balance that's contained in this budget. I think often enough, in an adversarial system, the opposition and the third party's job is to pick out the things that they don't agree with. It was refreshing to hear the member from Whitby–Oshawa speak of at least one issue that we do all agree with. I think that speaks highly of the individual but it also shows us what we're capable of in this place from time to time, when we do find an issue that overrides those partisan concerns and is worthy of support. I accept the constructive criticism that's coming from the other side. I know that people are listening to it. I also, from time to time, obviously, appreciate when people say that there are some good things in here.

I think there's a number of good things in here that we should concentrate on. I'm not suggesting for a minute that people in my riding and people in the province of Ontario aren't concerned with our ability to eliminate the deficit. I think once we turned our attention to doing the right things when times are really tough, we're starting to emerge now with very strong economic opportunities for this province, and people really want to see a plan in place that gets us back to those balanced budget days. I think it's achievable. I think the plan that is spelled out in here is a reasonable plan. But at the same time it's not a cut-and-burn, it's not a slashing budget. It's one that protects the public services and protects the interests of taxpayers.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It's always a pleasure to take part in the debate on the budget bill of this government, and it's always somewhat disappointing to listen to the government try to sell this budget as something that's going to be good for Ontario.

This bill doesn't do anything to help a family that is suffering and trying to make ends meet, a family that has seen their electrical bills double—double—over the term of this government, families that have seen their taxes increase 70%—73% overall—where this economy has only expanded by 9% or 10%. All taxes, whether it be corporate taxes—any kind of tax that the government gets, one way or another, comes out of the consumer's pocket. If you take it out of the corporate sector of our province or our small businesses—those small businesses do business with Ontario consumers. One way or another it trickles down and the Ontario consumer, the taxpayer, ends up paying all of those taxes. This government has seen fit to increase those taxes in such a disproportionate amount.

Watching the tax revenues of this government increase 73% while the economy of this province only increased by 10%, it's far and away out of all proportion to what Ontario can afford, and we've seen the results. We've seen the only job increases—the government is always proud to talk about job creation, but over 50% of that job creation that you're talking about is in the public sector.

There's no such thing as a bad job, but the public sector has to be paid for with tax dollars.

This government has done Ontarians a disservice with this budget.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** The member from Eglinton–Lawrence has up to two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** I just want to say that I certainly see the divide in the Conservative Party there. I think I'm with the member from Whitby–Oshawa, who says certainly there's a time for debate and taking potshots, but let's remember: Families really need help when it comes to dealing with mental health issues.

You can talk about tax cuts and trickle-down economics, but the reality of the fact is, when families are desperate, they don't know where to turn. They've been to our offices; they come for help, and you tell them, "Well, we gave you a tax cut." I'd rather tell them I gave them some help for their mental health challenges, for their children and their school. I would take that choice any time. Never mind telling them about trickle-down economics. Tell that to a mother who's got a child who needs some help with their mental health issues—

**Interjection:** Or a farmer who can't hold on to his farm.

**Mr. Mike Colle:** —or a farmer who can't hold on to his farm.

The main thing is, I just want—if I had time to engage my colleague from East York here about transit. I don't dismiss some of the criticism or commentary. It's all very, very relevant, what he said about whether we tunnel or we don't tunnel. All I know is, being a former TTC chair, one thing I'll tell you is that the worst enemy of public transit in Toronto has been prolonged, nauseating, useless debate and navel-gazing. We should have been building, and we should have kept building. Our biggest mistake is when we stop building, because when we stop building, we basically lose momentum, the costs escalate and congestion continues.

I've talked to so many experts over the years. I'm still talking to people who know a lot—Dick Soberman, Ed Levy. Everybody's got a very valid point, but all I know is that—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** Thank you.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo):** It now being past 6 o'clock, I declare that this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1802.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
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Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

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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<b>Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)</b>	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
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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	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	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, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	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	
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<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Gélinas, France (NDP) <b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Oakville Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	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
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Mauro, Bill (LIB) <b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	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) <b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)</b>	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
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Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
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	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
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Vacant	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	

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Tony Ruprecht  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin  
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Group and the London Stock Exchange Group / Comité  
spécial sur la transaction proposée entre le Groupe TMX et le  
London Stock Exchange Group**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Frank Klees  
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs  
Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown  
Frank Klees, Gerry Phillips  
Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Continued from back cover

## PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

### Human Rights Commission

Mr. Ted Arnott ..... 5256

### Oak Ridges moraine

Mr. John O'Toole ..... 5256

### Taxation

Mr. John O'Toole ..... 5256

### Replacement workers

Mr. Ted Arnott ..... 5256

### Identity theft

Mr. Tony Ruprecht ..... 5257

### Wind turbines

Mr. John O'Toole ..... 5257

### Firearms control

Mr. Tony Ruprecht ..... 5257

### Wind turbines

Mr. Ernie Hardeman ..... 5257

### Wind turbines

Mr. Ted Arnott ..... 5258

### Employment insurance

Mr. Tony Ruprecht ..... 5258

### Gasoline prices

Mr. John O'Toole ..... 5258

### Ontario pharmacists

Mr. Ted Arnott ..... 5258

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

### Better Tomorrow for Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2011, Bill 173, Mr. Duncan / Loi de 2011 sur des lendemains meilleurs pour l'Ontario (mesures budgétaires), projet de loi 173, M. Duncan

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel ..... 5259

Hon. Glen R. Murray ..... 5260

Mr. John O'Toole ..... 5261

Mr. Michael Prue ..... 5262

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast ..... 5262

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette ..... 5262

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel ..... 5263

Mr. Ted Arnott ..... 5263

Mr. Michael Prue ..... 5266

Mr. Bill Mauro ..... 5266

Mrs. Christine Elliott ..... 5267

Mr. Howard Hampton ..... 5267

Mr. Ted Arnott ..... 5267

Mr. Michael Prue ..... 5268

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn ..... 5270

Mr. John O'Toole ..... 5271

Mr. Bob Delaney ..... 5271

Hon. Bob Chiarelli ..... 5271

Mr. Michael Prue ..... 5272

Mr. Mario Sergio ..... 5272

Mr. Tony Ruprecht ..... 5273

Mr. John O'Toole ..... 5274

Mr. Howard Hampton ..... 5275

Mr. Jeff Leal ..... 5275

Mr. John Yakabuski ..... 5275

Mr. Mario Sergio ..... 5276

Mr. John Yakabuski ..... 5276

Mr. Howard Hampton ..... 5279

Mr. Bob Delaney ..... 5279

Mr. John O'Toole ..... 5279

Mr. Michael Prue ..... 5279

Mr. John Yakabuski ..... 5280

Mr. Howard Hampton ..... 5280

Mr. Bill Mauro ..... 5282

Mr. John O'Toole ..... 5283

Mr. Michael Prue ..... 5283

Hon. James J. Bradley ..... 5283

Mr. Howard Hampton ..... 5284

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn ..... 5284

Mr. Wayne Arthurs ..... 5286

Mr. Michael Prue ..... 5287

Mr. Ted Chudleigh ..... 5288

Mr. Yasir Naqvi ..... 5288

Mr. Mike Colle ..... 5288

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn ..... 5288

Mr. Ernie Hardeman ..... 5289

Mr. Michael Prue ..... 5292

Mr. Lou Rinaldi ..... 5292

Mrs. Christine Elliott ..... 5293

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel ..... 5293

Mr. Ernie Hardeman ..... 5293

Mr. Jeff Leal ..... 5294

Mr. Mike Colle ..... 5295

Mrs. Christine Elliott ..... 5296

Mr. Michael Prue ..... 5297

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn ..... 5297

Mr. Ted Chudleigh ..... 5297

Mr. Mike Colle ..... 5298

Second reading debate deemed adjourned ..... 5298

## CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Monday 11 April 2011 / Lundi 11 avril 2011

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar .....	5243
Mr. John O'Toole.....	5243
Mrs. Julia Munro.....	5243
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	5243
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	5243

### ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

#### Ministers' expenses

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5243
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5243

#### Ministers' expenses

Mr. Tim Hudak .....	5244
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5244

#### Hydro rates

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5245
Hon. Brad Duguid.....	5245

#### Taxation

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5245
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5246

#### Executive compensation

Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	5246
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5246

#### Full-day kindergarten

Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	5247
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	5247

#### Ontario economy

Mr. Bob Delaney.....	5247
Hon. Sandra Pupatello.....	5248

#### Minister's expenses

Ms. Lisa MacLeod .....	5248
Hon. Glen R. Murray .....	5248

#### Injured workers

Mr. Paul Miller.....	5249
Hon. Charles Sousa .....	5249

#### Workplace safety

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn.....	5249
Hon. Charles Sousa.....	5249

#### Assistance to farmers

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	5250
Hon. Carol Mitchell .....	5250

#### Health care funding

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	5250
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5250

#### Health care

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	5251
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	5251

#### Hydro rates

Mrs. Joyce Savoline .....	5251
Hon. Rick Bartolucci.....	5251

#### Forest industry

Mr. Howard Hampton .....	5252
Hon. Michael Gravelle .....	5252

#### Family law

Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	5252
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	5253

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

#### John Arnold Tory

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	5253
-----------------------------	------

#### Hockey

Mr. Michael Prue .....	5253
------------------------	------

#### Assistance to farmers

Mr. Jeff Leal.....	5254
--------------------	------

#### Samuel Holland

Mr. Frank Klees .....	5254
-----------------------	------

#### Renewable energy

Mr. Kuldip Kular.....	5254
-----------------------	------

#### George Mech

Mr. John O'Toole.....	5254
-----------------------	------

#### Parkinson's disease

Mr. Dave Levac.....	5255
---------------------	------

#### Robotics competition

Mr. Bob Delaney .....	5255
-----------------------	------

#### Municipal government

Mr. Phil McNeely.....	5255
-----------------------	------

### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

#### Standing Committee on Justice Policy

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	5256
Report adopted .....	5256

*Continued on inside back cover*