



**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 3 May 2000

Mercredi 3 mai 2000

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 3 May 2000

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 3 mai 2000

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ANNIVERSARY OF POLISH CONSTITUTION

Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park): It is an honour and privilege for me, on behalf of this House and specifically my colleague Tony Ruprecht, to rise to commemorate a very special day for all legislatures, the May 3 Constitution Day for Poland and Polish Canadians.

The 1791 Polish Constitution was only the second in the world, and the first in Europe, enacted for equal rights, universal education and the state care of orphans and the elderly. The struggle of the Polish people for those kinds of rights over the last few centuries has been an inspiration all around the world. Many of us sitting in legislatures today owe the precedent of that constitution and that ongoing struggle which for my generation became clear at Gdansk for that having taken place.

I'm pleased to remark that today, for the second time, the Ontario Legislature has acknowledged that irrepressible spirit of freedom on the part of the Polish people with a special flag-raising ceremony. In attendance were many distinguished Polish Canadians, including Wanda Bujalska of the Polish Teachers' Association; Maja Kaszuba of the Katyn Family Association; Anna Paudyn of the charitable foundation of the Canadian Polish Congress; Hanna Sokolska of the Protection of Poland's Name and Dignity Committee, Polish Scouting Association; Zofia Rozwadowska and Albina Polatynska, outstanding community volunteers; General Michal Gutowski; Commander Romuald Tyminski; Andrzej H. Mrozewski, chairman of the council of the Canadian Polish Congress; Mieczyslaw Szczecinski, honorary president of the Polish Veterans Association; and Zdzislaw Krynski of the Polish-Canadian Health Professionals Association.

I'm sure I join all members of this Parliament in acknowledging this very special day.

Mr Carl DeFaria (Mississauga East): I'm pleased to rise today to speak on the occasion of the celebration of the anniversary of the Polish Constitution of May 3, 1791, the first modern constitution in Europe and second in the world, second only to the Constitution of the United States of America.

The Polish Constitution of May 3, 1791, consisted of 11 short but powerful clauses which emphasized freedom, democracy and the principle of inclusion. It was the first document in Europe that included people who were not of noble heritage so that they could participate in nation-building and public law, a document with vision and foresight even by today's standards. For example, it was a document that created the first ministry of national education in the world.

Today, Canadians celebrate with Canadians of Polish background on this special occasion independence and democracy in Poland. It's fitting for us to join them in this celebration because it was a historical moment not only for Poland but for the world. So today, to all the people of Polish background who are here and who are watching us, I say serdeczna, gratulacje, polakum.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I rose in the House on April 5 to express my anger and frustration and the concerns of residents on Hamilton Mountain with respect to a threat to health care on Hamilton Mountain. The Hamilton Health Sciences Corp has threatened to close the only acute care hospital emergency room on the mountain, the most growing part of the city.

As well, this would have caused the movement of the regional cancer centre, which was just built for \$41 million, and the move would have cost about \$100 million. I'm delighted to note that much has changed since that date. We now have the Minister of Health's assurance that none of the acute care facilities in Hamilton will close and that the long-awaited expansion of the cancer centre at the Henderson will proceed. We received that news yesterday.

I want to thank the minister and I want to acknowledge today a number of individuals and organizations who played a critical role in reversing a decision which would have led to a health care disaster. A particular thank you to Debbie Mattina, chair of the Save the Henderson campaign; campaign members Brenda Wells, Joanne Webb, Michelle Webb, Jan Ouzas, Robin McKenna; CUPE Local 794—I now know why it's called "organized labour," as they were amazing at helping with the signatures, amassing more than 50,000 themselves—and all of the area MPPs and aldermen.

We all put our political colours aside, worked for our community and got what we needed with respect to

health care in Hamilton-Wentworth. I'd like to acknowledge all who took part in this.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm very pleased to rise today and share with the members of the House the fact that the accounting firm of Hobb, Bakker, Bergin and Hill were kind enough to put on a breakfast meeting with respect to the provincial budget. I can just tell you that, in a very non-partisan way, there were members representing all political aspects of the community, as I suppose you'd put it.

But the biggest, overwhelming compliment of the morning certainly was that they all unanimously agreed that having a balanced budget is an accomplishment that each Ontarian shares. Comments were made about having the lowest small business tax threshold, and initiatives that are common to our agenda were widely supported.

However, the important commitments to health care were very broadly received and it's recognized that this province is taking a leadership role, not just for Ontario and for the sake of our people in this province but indeed for all citizens of Canada. Also, there was a lot of wide acceptance for the over \$1 billion that's going to be committed to the transportation infrastructure in this province.

I just wanted to share in a non-partisan way and publicly thank George Kouri and Victoria Green from the board of trade. Members from the chamber of commerce and the business improvement areas were all in attendance. I can tell you there was wide acceptance for the budget of yesterday.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): We all know that the budget has been balanced at the expense of our children's future. The government should have used today's wealth to secure tomorrow's prosperity. It fails to improve front-line health care services, community homemaking and nursing care, neglects higher education and certainly does not deliver tax fairness, especially when the bulk of the tax cuts go to corporate Ontario.

The property taxpayers and ratepayers are also seeing the results of the downloading to municipalities, with over 600 new and higher user fees initiated by this government over the last five years.

In my community, not only will water and sewer bills be raised by 8% to 13% September 1 in a substantial part of the city of Kingston, but we also know that the electric/hydro rates will go up across this province by probably anywhere from 10% to 15% this fall.

In a province of affluence and wealth, the government must govern for all the people and address the issues of poverty, homelessness and housing for all of the people of Ontario, not just their chosen few.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member for Broadview-Greenwood.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): Thank you, Speaker. I believe the new name is Toronto-Danforth.

I'm happy to stand today and tell people that yesterday, a few hours after Ernie Eves delivered his budget, I was at the Ralph Thornton Centre along with residents and people from the area and from the Toronto library board trying to find ways to save the Queen-Saulter library. The night before that I was at the Bruce public school strategizing once again with parents, teachers and students on ways to keep that wonderful little neighbourhood school open. Two other Catholic schools in the neighbourhood have already been closed: St William and St Ann. These closures and threatened closures are a direct result of the Harris government cuts to education and downloading to the municipalities.

I would like the members to understand, as they brag about the balanced budget and new tax cuts that are going to primarily benefit the rich once again, that these are some examples of some of the people on whose backs the budget was balanced. Royson James from the Toronto Star got it right today when he said, "Greater Toronto Has Very Little to Smile About Today." No money for public transportation, no money for housing or to deal with the homeless crisis, no money for child care—and on and on. The budget yesterday was a disgrace. They're rolling in money and yet they don't have any to spend on social services and education in our communities.

1340

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): I represent a rural riding. The interests of my constituents are very much centred around strengthening our agricultural economy and preserving our way of life in rural and small-town Ontario.

I spent a good part of this winter travelling around Ontario, listening to farmers and rural people to gather their ideas on the future of agriculture and on ways to bring increased prosperity to rural Ontario. As an MPP, I welcomed the opportunity to get out to Huron, Northumberland and Essex counties, as well as towns like Caledonia, Burford and Tillsonburg in my area.

Yesterday's budget confirms our commitment to rural Ontario. Minister Eves announced the creation of a \$600-million Ontario small-town and rural development fund that will boost both economic development and infrastructure renewal in rural areas. Farmers and all rural people will benefit greatly from the 67 tax cuts announced yesterday, most notably from the reductions in personal income taxes and business taxes, and the \$200 taxpayer dividend.

In contrast to urban Ontario, rural Ontario faces different challenges; challenges of distance, population sparsity, post-secondary education, for example. On the road we heard that these challenges must be met. Minister Eves's commitment will go a long way to fostering economic development and to rebuilding our towns and villages in rural Ontario.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The sound we heard in the boardroom of the polluters yesterday was a collective sigh of relief as once again the Harris government put the Ministry of the Environment on the chopping block, slashing another \$16 million, or almost 10%, from its budget for controlling pollution and enforcing environmental laws, bringing total cuts since the Conservatives took office to \$100 million. With substantially fewer resources and one third of their staff already lost, the environment ministry has been decimated by the axe-wielding Harris anti-environment crowd who refer to the environment as the "E word."

The firing of scientists, technicians, enforcement officers and legal staff has left the ministry a shell of its former robust self. Prosecutions are down, fines and penalties have dropped, monitoring has been reduced and virtually every enforcement mechanism has all but disappeared in the Harris government's rush to please corporate polluters and to keep its promise to "get the Ministry of the Environment out of your face."

Even the business elite of the world, who gathered at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, in January declared that climate change was the greatest challenge facing the world at the beginning of the century. Yet the Harris budget demands huge cuts from the environment and natural resources budgets.

On our highways travellers face gridlock, farmers and conservationists face the taking of their land for ever-widening roadways and people face deteriorating air quality and the depletion of fuel supplies as the Harris regime abandons public transportation completed at a time when local transit commissions need millions for operating equipment and operating expenditures and GO Transit cries out for the expansion of service to such locations as St Catharines and Niagara Falls.

IAN GOUDY

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): I rise in the Legislature today to recognize and congratulate one of my constituents, Mr Ian Goudy, who lives in Ilderton, a few miles north of London. Mr Goudy is one of 14 Canadians who will be receiving the Governor General's medal of bravery, a medal which is awarded for acts of bravery in hazardous circumstances.

On May 21, 1999, Ian Goudy pulled a man from a burning car that had spun out of control, hit a tree, and come to rest in a pool of gasoline spilling from its ruptured tank. Hearing crashing sounds around midnight, Mr Goudy rushed outside his home to witness flames shooting through the sunroof opening and a young man trapped inside the wreck. With complete disregard for his own safety, Mr Goudy reached inside the vehicle, released the driver's seat belt and pulled him from the burning pile of rubble. Sadly, the victim did not survive.

Mr Goudy's act of heroism did not go unnoticed. Queen Elizabeth created the Decorations of Bravery in 1972. In the 25 years since then, more than 2,000 people have received Decorations of Bravery. I commend Mr

Goudy for displaying bravery of a very high order. I would like to ask my colleagues in the House today to join with me in congratulating and thanking Ian Goudy.

SPEAKER'S RULING

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): On April 27, the member for Don Valley East rose on a point of privilege to express concern about a letter that was sent by the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore. Specifically, the member for Don Valley East took exception with the portion of the letter which read, "... private members' bills never receive support from the government as they are designed to oppose existing legislation and embarrass the government."

As the member correctly stated, privileges are rights enjoyed by the House collectively and by the members of the House individually. As Speaker Sauv  has stated, "There must be some connection between the material alleged to contain the interference and the parliamentary proceedings for there to be a breach of privilege."

The member also raised the issue of contempt. Contempt is defined as "any act or omission which obstructs or impedes [the] House ... in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any member or officer in the discharge of their duties. All breaches of privilege are contempts of the House, but not all contempts are necessarily breaches of privilege."

In the case at hand, as opposed to the case cited by the member and ruled on by Speaker Stockwell in 1997, the letter does not have any direct adverse implications upon the assembly. It is the opinion of one member directed to an individual. The letter may contain remarks about the tactics of the government and opposition, but they are not a direct reflection on the Legislature. The letter expresses the opinion of one member only, an opinion that was in fact disproved on the very day the member for Don Valley East raised this point, when the House did in fact give second reading to an opposition private member's bill, Bill 2, standing in the name of Mr Kwinter.

It is not in the nature of government advertising and broadcasting throughout the province. While members may disagree with the arguments expressed in this letter, it does not impede any member from introducing a bill, nor does it prevent the Legislature from considering this bill. It does not cause any member to come here without the uncontested ability to continue the debate on this issue.

I therefore find there has been no breach of privilege nor a case of contempt. I would, however, like to thank the member for Don Valley East for raising this matter.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the eighth report of the standing committee on government agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 106(e), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RAVES ACT, 2000

LOI DE 2000 SUR LES RAVES

Mrs Papatello moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 73, An Act to promote public peace and safety by regulating late-night dance events / Projet de loi 73, Loi visant à promouvoir la paix et la sécurité publiques en réglementant les danses nocturnes.

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

The member for a short statement.

Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor West): The purpose of this bill is to regulate parties known as raves. Some members may be aware of this latest dance trend and the easy access to the drug ecstasy, which is often found in use at these raves. If this bill is passed, it would, among several things, allow cities to issue permits and set the conditions for these raves and hold the promoter and the property owner responsible when and if they are in violation of the act.

After a lengthy discussion with cities and police authorities, I believe the bill affords municipalities the strength they need to regulate what has become an unsafe and frankly downright dangerous trend at raves. We advanced the statistics from the coroner's office, which were up until October 1999, and nine young people had died. Since that time, there have been four more deaths of young people by the drug ecstasy. I don't think we have time to wait and I truly hope this bill is passed quickly and will be up for debate on May 18.

1350

MOTIONS

REFERRAL OF BILL 68

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): I move that, pursuant to standing order 72(a), the order for second reading of Bill 68, An Act, in memory of Brian Smith, to amend the Mental Health Act and the Health

Care Consent Act, 1996, be discharged and the bill be referred to the standing committee on general government.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

The motion is carried.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Mr Speaker, I request unanimous consent to move a motion that the House sit tonight from the usual time of 6:45 till 9:30.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? I am afraid I heard some noes.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): On a point of order, Speaker: Earlier today we were informed that the Premier, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health would not be here to answer questions, but we were told that the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities would be and we would like to have her here to answer questions.

The Speaker: I know it is a little bit difficult because the times vary and sometimes we get through a lot quicker than others. If we could, though, it is important to get here on time. Terrific, the minister is making it. It is time now for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. I must tell you that upon first seeing the budget document I was very optimistic about what was going to be in it for Ontario's young people, because it made specific reference to "brighter futures." Not only did it make specific reference to "brighter futures," it also had a picture on the cover showing some Ontario young people. I thought for sure this bespoke much, that surely this budget would contain good news for our young people and their families when it comes to higher education in Ontario. I also of course understood, as you do, that Ontario ranks 59th out of 60th among our North American competitors when it comes to investment in higher education.

Minister, how could you possibly have allowed this budget to be introduced by this government, your government, without doing anything further in any substantive way for Ontario's young people?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): This government has applied more money, over \$4 billion, to post-secondary education than any other government in the province of Ontario. Just this year, and with this budget yesterday,

we announced some \$286 million in new SuperBuild investments, which brings that amount of money up to \$1.8 billion for our students in the future as we plan and work with them for accessibility to our universities and colleges right across Ontario.

I am quite surprised at the tenor of this question given the record of this government, which put students first and has promised a place for every qualified and motivated student in our post-secondary system, now and in the future.

Mr McGuinty: The facts speak for themselves. In the first year of this new millennium you are investing \$200 million less than was invested in 1996. We just learned today that medical school tuition has gone up from \$13,000 a year to over \$14,000 a year. Those are the facts. This is as a result of your capable efforts on behalf of Ontario's young people to ensure that they all find room in the university inn. Do you know what you're doing, Minister? You are effectively using 1996 dollars for our young people and asking them to compete in 2001. That's like asking a 486 computer to outperform a Pentium III. It doesn't matter how hard they work; they just can't catch up.

Our students are about to enter into the most important race of their lives. That's the race to get the best high-value-added jobs here in our province. If they can get that, then we have a secured future. Minister, again I ask you, how much more short-sighted could you have gotten than to fail to live up to your responsibilities to represent their interests in this budget?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I could go through the list, and the first part of the list is that we've added some 24 new buildings in SuperBuild. Secondly, we are helping our students by making our programs more accessible. Young people now will be able to earn \$1,700, as opposed to \$600, during their study time, and this will not be against their OSAP qualifications.

Our Ontario graduate scholarships: \$3,500 for our graduate students, increasing in number, so that we will have our graduate students moving on into research and development, which is so important for the competitiveness of our country. Secondly, it's very important so that we have more professors down the road, young people who aspire to be teachers in our colleges and our universities. Our young people want jobs at the colleges and universities and we've increased that as well. That's just accessibility. That's helping students. They are our first priority.

Mr McGuinty: This minister likes to talk about capital dollars. I'm talking about operating dollars. The fact is that our children today, the echo generation, are marching through our primary and secondary schools and they'll shortly be knocking on the doors at our universities. Do you know what you're telling them? You're telling them, "There is no room for you here, but I'm inviting in American private universities and you can be my guest and pay those people \$40,000 for your tuition over there." That is not living up to your responsibility and your government's commitment to ensure that our

young people find space in publicly funded, affordable universities.

Minister, my question is, do you really understand that your failure to invest in higher education, your failure to make places in affordable, publicly funded universities for our young people is resulting in the fact that we will no longer have a bright future collectively in terms of our economy? Do you get that?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: In response, I am very saddened by the leader of the official opposition, who I remember to be a person who encouraged young people to aspire for the best. Today he's only repeating what he said last week, when he talked about sitting around the kitchen table telling people that the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Would the minister take her seat. Member for Windsor-St Clair, come to order. We can't have shouting across. I can't hear. As I said before, some heckling is allowed, but when you constantly do it and there's no let-up, I can't let that go on. Minister, sorry for the interruption.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: I'm disappointed in the leader of the official opposition, because it is important that we tell our young people that there will be a space for every qualified and motivated student at our colleges and universities.

We are making a plan and we started with this plan immediately. Yesterday we enhanced the plan so that 73,800 new spaces through new buildings will be available for these young people who will be aspiring to go to our universities. I actually think that it is totally irresponsible for the leader of the official opposition to sit around his kitchen table or be at anybody else's kitchen table telling these young people there won't be space. We have a plan and there will be space for every qualified and motivated student, and that budget yesterday added another \$200 million for that problem.

1400

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of the Environment, another minister who has obviously abandoned his responsibilities as well. Going into yesterday's budget lock-up, I thought for sure that of all the areas that these people were not going to touch, of all the areas that these people would not cut, surely they would not cut the Ministry of the Environment. They've already cut it by some 40%. I thought for sure they wouldn't touch that. I thought for sure we had a new person at the helm who would be there and say to Mike: "There's no way. You're not getting any money from me. I'm here to defend our environment."

But you know what happened? This minister agreed to a further 9% cut of the Ministry of the Environment in our province. Minister, tell me why did you fail to stand up for our interests when it comes to our natural

environment? Why did you fail to stand up for clean air and clean water in Ontario?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): Nothing can be further from the truth. In fact, in 1999-2000, the ministry successfully accelerated water and sewage grants to municipalities. The 2000-01 budget will contain \$51 million for water protection to meet the remaining commitments to accelerate and pay out grants—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Would the minister take his seat. The member for Windsor West, please come to order. Minister of the Environment.

Hon Mr Newman: As I was saying, that will give the opportunity to pay out the grants to municipalities that met the eligibility requirements but did not have the final cost estimates for the 1999-2000 budget.

The Leader of the Opposition also fails to note that we've committed to establish \$6 million province-wide for a ground water monitoring network and the continuation of our work in climate change. He also failed to talk about the establishment of a \$1-billion SuperBuild millennium partnerships initiative which includes environmental projects, and I want to assure all members that I'll be working closely with the SuperBuild Corp and our partners to champion environmental projects.

I remain committed to the protection of Ontario's environment as we continue to set and enforce tough environmental standards in our province.

Mr McGuinty: I can well appreciate that this minister is reduced to baffle-gab, because he's done nothing of substance to move forward on the environment front. All this government has done is to look to the Ministry of the Environment for purposes of cuts, for purposes of taking money away. You would have thought that, with all of this money rolling in, today was the perfect time to begin to build up our investments in the Ministry of the Environment so we have everything that we need to better police and prosecute polluters in Ontario. You'd have thought that's what this government would have done. Instead, they were reduced to cutting it one more time.

Minister, you should know what they're doing in the United States of America. In their latest budget, under the Environmental Protection Act they have greatly—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. The leader of the official opposition, sorry for the interruption.

Mr McGuinty: I guess I touched a nerve there, Speaker.

This year the United States budget contains the single largest increase ever for the Environmental Protection Agency. Our competitors south of the border are beefing up their ability to patrol, regulate, monitor and prosecute when it comes to pollution. Why is it that here in Ontario we are going in the opposite direction?

Hon Mr Newman: I rather enjoyed the question from the Leader of the Opposition. In fact, I would suggest to him that you ought to be spending more money on your

research rather than relying on a daily newspaper for your research.

Again, this is a true Liberal question, taking both sides of an issue. Here we're talking about the Americanization of the Ontario environment. That's what the member opposite wants. He's talking about both sides of the issue. Perhaps he learned that on his trip to Washington, with his high-priced American consultants in Washington. What he said here today—nothing could be further from the truth.

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Mr McGuinty: Now apparently we've also got to contend with verbal pollution in this province. What we should have done is seized the moment in Ontario—

Interjection.

The Speaker: The member come to order. Her leader's waiting to ask the question. Sorry for the interruption. The leader of the official opposition.

Mr McGuinty: It would seem to me that if we apparently have \$4 billion for corporations in Ontario, and if we have \$650 million available for those who like to play the stock markets, surely we could have found a few million dollars to beef up our ability to patrol, regulate, monitor and enforce our laws in Ontario when it comes to pollution. Surely we should have been able to do that.

You know what you should have done, Minister? You should have taken the opportunity to invest in the protection of our air and our water. You could have cracked down on polluters. You could have converted our coal-burning plants to natural gas. You could have devoted more money to cleaning up the Great Lakes toxic hot spots. You could have made real steps towards lowering sulphur in gas. Those are all things that you could have done. Instead, like the Minister for Colleges and Universities, when Mike Harris came asking for money, you said: "Take all you want from me. I have nothing here to protect." Tell me, Minister, why should you remain in your job if you're not prepared to do it?

Hon Mr Newman: I think what the Leader of the Opposition failed to recognize is that much of the funding from the previous year was one-time funding. There were programs and funds that were paid out over the last few years. There was one-time funding. We're actually starting to see the final payments being made.

With respect to the Great Lakes, as the Leader of the Opposition brought that subject up, I can tell him that the Great Lakes have been cleaner than they've been in decades as a result of this government.

He raises the issue of sulphur in gasoline. It's incumbent upon the federal environment minister and the Prime Minister—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Take a seat. Order. I thank the Minister for Education. I'll deal with it. Stop the clock for a minute please.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): You're on the wrong page of the binder.

The Speaker: Yes, thank you very much. I will deal with it.

Let me say this: Today, we're obviously in a mood where people have a lot of energy, except the pages and myself, who have to stand up all the time. I can't continue on when I can't hear what's going on and there's shouting across. As I've said on a number of occasions, I don't mind some heckling, but when it's constant and when it's continued right through and I can't hear, I'm going to have to stand up. We're getting to the point now where I'm going to have to warn people the second time and so I'd appreciate all the member's co-operation. What happens in a situation like this when one side gets going is that the other side gets going and then they're shouting back and forth. Nobody can get their clips on TV because you can't hear anything, and that doesn't serve anybody's purpose. I appreciate the co-operation. I am going to have to get a little bit quicker on some of the members in warning them. I just want them to know that so that they aren't surprised, but we are getting awfully noisy today.

Again, sorry for the interruption. The minister may continue.

Hon Mr Newman: The point I was trying to make with respect to sulphur in gasoline is that it is clearly the federal government that has the responsibility on sulphur and gasoline. So next time the Leader of the Opposition's in Ottawa maybe he talk to the Prime Minister and maybe he can talk to the federal environment minister and ask them to take a strong stand on reducing sulphur in gasoline.

1410

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Acting Premier. Yesterday's budget shows that you see Ontario as a big Monopoly game. If you pass go, you collect \$200, and if you're rich, you put four hotels up on the property. But in Monopoly, if you don't become rich very quickly, you're out of the game. And that's exactly how it is with your budget. When you do the numbers, you have only one cent for health care for every dollar that you gave away in tax cuts. You try to peddle the myth that the tax cuts are for the middle class, but when you do the numbers there, a family with an income of \$30,000 may get \$100 out of the tax cut, but a high-income earner, with \$330,000, gets \$10,000 out of your tax cut. That's the reality of it: mega tax cuts for the well off.

Minister, you have frozen the minimum wage for five a half years—five and a year half years with no increase. Can you tell us, if you have mega tax cuts for the well-off, didn't minimum wage workers at least deserve a raise after a five-and-a-half year freeze?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): As all the people of Ontario know, the tax cuts have created tremendous economic growth in this province, combined with the other policies that are pro-growth that the Mike Harris government has implemented in the last five years. You also know that the tax

system is more progressive now, under the Mike Harris government, than it was under the NDP regime five years ago. There are more low-income working people off the tax rolls. If you're talking about the best way to help people help themselves, it's to give them a job. With our policies, you've had record numbers of jobs created in this province.

I remember five years ago in this very House when the NDP and the Liberals ridiculed our promise of creating over 700,000 net new jobs. As you heard yesterday, the Minister of Finance announced that we've created to this date 701,000 net new jobs. The thanks and the credit for that goes to the hard-working people of Ontario who have made this province again a great place to live and to work and to raise a family.

Mr Hampton: We're certainly seeing a new definition of "progressive" when someone with an income of \$330,000 gets a \$10,000 tax cut and someone with an income of \$30,000 gets a \$100 tax cut. But it's even less progressive than that because 25% of Ontario taxpayers have such a low income that they don't pay provincial income tax, so they don't even get this \$200 that you're talking about giving when someone passes go. The lowest-paid workers in the province don't even get that. That's one million people who are left out right there.

This budget also does absolutely nothing for affordable housing. CMHC tells us that in your Monopoly game, where the landlords are getting it all, in Toronto an average two-bedroom apartment now costs \$1,236 more than it cost a couple of years ago. But a worker with an income \$20,000 or \$30,000 only gets \$100 out of your so-called tax cut. Tell me, Minister, how is it that you can afford mega tax cuts for the well-off, but somebody who needs affordable housing got absolutely nothing out of this budget?

Hon Mr Hodgson: The NDP's fiscal policies spoke for themselves for the five years that they were in government. Their policy on taxation drove wealth and jobs away from this province. It created record numbers of people who were trapped in the social assistance system.

Our policies have liberated almost half of the number of people who were on welfare when you were in power, and it's because we want to be competitive. Even Bob Rae, your former leader, acknowledges now that in a global economy your tax rates have to be competitive with the world if you want to retain jobs and attract investment to create more jobs.

Our agenda is a pro-growth agenda. Your questions about how to redistribute wealth by taxing everything that moves clearly don't work. They have worked no place in the world. Our policies of growth and of attracting investments are leading the way again for Canada, particularly right here in the province of Ontario, and the numbers speak for themselves.

Mr Hampton: The questions were: Don't low-paid workers deserve a raise? Don't people who are seeing rents go sky-high deserve some opportunity at affordable housing? After all, they work too, Minister.

I want to ask about another part of Ontario that was completely left out. We have pleaded now for over five years that you bring in an act for disabled Ontarians, an Ontarians with Disabilities Act, to ensure that they have access to opportunity in this province and physical access to buildings. We have again seen mega tax cuts for corporations; we see a mega-giveaway to those who already have a lot. Minister, if you can give that amount away to your corporate friends, couldn't you at least bring in an Ontarians with Disabilities Act so that the disabled could share in some of the wealth you're giving away as well?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I know that the Minister of Citizenship and Culture would like to bring some relevance to this discussion.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): I would like to say that there was some very good news in the budget yesterday for people with disabilities. We doubled the employment support budget under ODSP from \$18 million to \$35 million. Also, let me say that in that budget we reaffirmed the fact that we are coming forward with an action plan; we reaffirmed the fact that we would come forward in a comprehensive approach where we would look at those programs and legislation; we reaffirmed the fact that this government will move forward with a disability act within the economic goalposts that were defined in the Common Sense Revolution; and we once again confirmed that we're committed to people with disabilities in the province.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My next question is for the Minister of the Environment. I want to ask the Minister of the Environment why, when your government could give away so much to corporations, all you could do for the Ministry of the Environment was cut another \$16 million from the budget—another cut? Since 1994-95, it amounts to a \$100-million cut of the budget, and 40% of the enforcement staff are gone. Your own ministry staff said in their February 1999 delivery strategy that you don't have the resources to enforce all of our environmental laws.

Today you have a surplus. Can you explain, Minister, when you had so much money to give away to corporations, why the Ministry of the Environment at least couldn't get a sufficient budget so you could go out there and enforce our laws and protect our environment?

Hon Dan Newman (Minister of the Environment): The leader of the third party is very selective in his facts and fails to mention that we spent \$200 million on the provincial water protection fund; \$5 million on the Ontario Great Lakes Renewal Foundation; the fact that there's \$51 million for water protection in the budget this year; \$6 million for a province-wide ground water monitoring network and the continuation of our work on climate change; again I'm going to mention SuperBuild. There's \$1 billion for the SuperBuild millennium partner-

ships initiative, which includes environmental projects. That was clearly mentioned in the budget yesterday. I'll commit to the leader of the third party that I will work closely with the SuperBuild Corp and our partners to champion environmental projects again.

Mr Hampton: The minister mentions facts. I want to mention a few facts. You've allowed the importation of hazardous waste to quadruple under your watch. You have allowed Ontario Power Generation to buy pollution credits so they can exceed the air pollution limits. Your budget allocates \$1 billion for highway construction, which means more cars, more trucks, more pollution, and not one cent for public transit. Minister, this budget, from beginning to end, is bereft of any sort of strategy for protecting our environment, enhancing our environment. I ask you again, when you have mega-billions of dollars to give away to your corporate friends, some of whom are the worst polluters in Ontario, why don't you have the money to at least go out there and enforce the environmental laws that we have?

Hon Mr Newman: I'd encourage the leader of the third party to go beyond the budget and look at what the government's doing with respect to such programs as the Drive Clean program, the pilot emissions reduction trading project, Ontario's anti-smog action plan, landfill management regulations, and the environmental regulations that are in place for the new competitive electricity market. We've done a great deal to improve the quality of the air, the land and the water in this province.

1420

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Minister of Housing. Yesterday's budget failed to use today's wealth to secure tomorrow's prosperity, especially when it comes to our poorest and our most vulnerable—our homeless. We hear there was \$5 billion more in revenue than had been anticipated, and you would think, Minister, in keeping with your responsibilities, that you would have thought that some of that \$5 billion might be appropriated to help out our most vulnerable here in Ontario. We searched for this in the budget and there was nothing to be found. Not a single line. Not even a passing reference. Minister, tell me, why have you forsaken your responsibility when it comes to protecting our most needy and our most vulnerable here in Ontario—our homeless?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): Perhaps I should remind the honourable member of some of our prebudget announcements, because we wanted to do as much work as possible as early on as possible. As soon as we signed the housing deal with the federal government, we were able to release \$50 million for up to 10,000 Ontario families who needed rent-geared-to-income supplements, and that was announced in November. If the honourable member wants to know what we have done lately for people who are at risk of being homeless or are homeless, we can

stand by our numbers any day of the week and the evidence is right there.

Mr McGuinty: This minister should be ashamed of himself for making any kind of a pretense of helping out the homeless here in Ontario. Let's look at the facts. Homelessness is up in Barrie, it's up in Hamilton, it's up in Peterborough, it's up in Guelph, it's up in Kitchener, it's up in Waterloo, it's up in Ottawa-Carleton, it's up in Peel, it's up in North Bay, it's up in Brantford, it's up in Sarnia and it's up in Toronto.

Among the homeless population, the fastest growing group is single mothers and children. The wait for a family needing social housing in Toronto, Minister, is now 25 years. When are you going to start in a real and substantive way to protect the interests of our homeless? Again I ask you, why have you forsaken the homeless in Ontario?

Hon Mr Clement: I acknowledge that it is taking some time to fix the mess that was inherited from previous governments that tried, through more taxing and more spending and more regulation—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Would the minister take his seat. Member for Windsor-St Clair, last warning. Minister.

Hon Mr Clement: More taxing and more spending and more regulation, which created more of a problem than they inherited in the first place—

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): Tell us about the permanent shelter in Brampton on your watch.

The Speaker: Member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, last warning as well. Minister.

Hon Mr Clement: We need not apologize for the amount of work that Minister Baird is doing, that I am doing and that many other members of the cabinet are doing to face these problems: \$100 million in new dollars in commitment for the homeless and the near-homeless; an extra \$50 million for rent-gear-to-income—

Interjections.

The Speaker: Minister take his seat. Member for Don Valley East, his last warning, and member for Hamilton West. If we have to go through everybody, I will, but I warn you, it's your last warning and you'll be out, and we could do it. Minister, sorry.

Hon Mr Clement: No problem, Mr Speaker. Overall, \$2 billion of taxpayers' money is spent on the homeless or on those at risk of being homeless, by this government of Ontario. If the honourable member—

Interjection.

The Speaker: Minister take his seat. I'm sorry, the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale can't continue. I will have to name him. I warned him. He cannot continue to shout out. I ask him to leave the chamber.

Mr Smitherman was escorted from the chamber.

The Speaker: Just so the members know, I was slow in getting the clock stopped. We are going to hold the clock for 10 seconds—the clerks at the table are going to do that—and then the clock will begin. It was because of

my error we did that, not theirs. I was slow getting off the mark. I apologize to the table; they don't like to do that. Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon Mr Clement: We on this side of the House take this problem seriously. We are not involved in rhetoric; we are involved in action. It's issues that involve mental health. It's issues that involve housing. It's issues that involve social services. It's issues that involve prosperity. On this side of the House, we believe we have guaranteed more prosperity in this province through this budget than this province has ever seen in history.

If the honourable member wants to spend some time doing something that is fruitful, perhaps he should attend with his federal Liberal caucus members who have done the square root of zero to help tackle this problem. That would be helpful.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Last week you announced that some significant reforms were coming to Ontario's system of post-secondary education. In particular, you announced that Ontario's colleges of applied arts and technology, like Centennial College in my riding of Scarborough Centre, would be permitted to offer applied degrees on a pilot project basis. As I understand it, applied degrees refer to advanced programs offered through colleges that mix theory and practice to teach advanced skills to students.

Could the minister provide this House with more information about applied degrees and this new choice that will soon be available to Ontario students?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): Thank you to my colleague from Scarborough Centre for the question. In today's world our colleges are extremely competitive, and the students and employers are demanding that they be even more competitive. Being closely focused on the needs of the employers, and of course having high standards right now, they came forward and asked that we consider that about eight pilot projects be offered in our colleges. Howard Rundle, the chair of the committee and president of the Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario, stated, "This significant and visionary action by government recognizes the quality of Ontario college programming, the needs of Ontario students and the job market. Applied degrees will give students greater choice in the knowledge economy."

Ms Mushinski: I thank the minister for that answer.

In the case of applied degree projects and private universities, many of my constituents are concerned that this expansion of our post-secondary education system must be done with concern for the quality and integrity of the system in mind. Students, parents and employers will need to know that a new applied degree program offered at their local college is of high calibre and will be respected once they graduate.

Students attending private universities also need similar assurances. Students will want to know that the program they are studying is of high calibre and that the institution they are attending is credible and legitimate. Minister, what steps are you taking to ensure that any new private universities and college applied degree programs are deserving of provincial recognition?

Hon Mrs Cunningham: An important question, and I'd like to respond in this way: Any new degree programs in Ontario will have a quality assessment board to assess the programs and the quality of any degree, whether it be from a university or a college applied degree, to make sure that our students are benefiting, that the qualifications they have and that any degree they have will stand up to the standards we enjoy now, standards that will be important for our young people as they apply for jobs in business and industry, which may require them to compete around the world. The board will have a mandate to assess the new degree programs. They will also have a mandate to assess any programs from any out-of-province institution that may qualify to set up business in Ontario.

1430

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): This question is for the Minister of Transportation. When we went through the budget yesterday, we hoped that with all of this money rolling in as a result of a healthy American economy, surely there would be money available for public transit here in Ontario. We thought most certainly there would be money available for public transit. This minister's own staff has told him that road traffic in the GTA is going to increase to by 250% over the next 20 years, and it's not just a matter of gridlock and drivers' convenience. This is also all about air quality and our health. We now know that we spend over \$1 billion annually in Canada on health care costs that are related to driving and exhaust fumes. Minister, not only have you missed the bus when it comes to public transit, you've made sure the bus isn't even going to show up.

I'm asking you, Minister, like all of the other ministers who have abandoned their responsibilities under this budget, why did you abandon your responsibility to ensure that we continue to invest in public transit so not only do we have greater convenience in our hectic lives that we lead, but we have better air to breathe?

Hon David Turnbull (Minister of Transportation): Dalton, Dalton, Dalton, instead of going out and making a fool of yourself on television last night, perhaps you should have been reading the budget.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Stop the clock for a quick moment. Minister of Transportation—

Interjections.

The Speaker: He did withdraw it. I appreciate he has withdrawn. I'll just remind all members the reason we use the name of the ridings is because when we come in

here, we represent all the people. That's also one of the reasons we don't have personal accusations going back and forth, because when you do that, you're not only insulting the member but all of the people who voted for the member as well. I know that the new ridings are difficult to get used to, but I thank the member for withdrawing it and appreciate his co-operation.

Hon Mr Turnbull: I absolutely withdraw it. But I will repeat the fact that perhaps you should have been spending yesterday evening reading the budget documents and understanding them instead of blowing absolute nonsense out to the media.

As part of local services realignment, we created significant tax room for municipal transit, and it was a fair trade that was made. But in addition, yesterday the finance minister announced a \$1-billion SuperBuild millennium partnerships initiative, and municipalities can certainly apply for infrastructure in this area. So read the document and try to understand.

Mr McGuinty: This has to be the be-all and the end-all. I asked the Minister of Transportation what he's doing to move forward when it comes to investing in public transit in Ontario and he talks to me about tax room. I'll suggest that he tell all of our children who are clogging hospital emergency wards in Ontario as a result of suffering from asthma to talk to them about tax room.

This minister is failing his responsibility to protect our health. He's failing his responsibility to protect air quality in Ontario. It's not just a matter of convenience. It's not just a matter of gridlock. It's a matter of health. Don't talk to me about tax room. Tell me what you're doing in a real and concrete way to protect our air quality by investing in public transit.

Hon Mr Turnbull: Unlike the federal government, that talked about creating tax room in 1977 and then re-occupied the area, we've reduced taxes in this province. We have created tax room for the municipalities, \$2.5 billion, something you couldn't conceive of because you were so interested in taxing and spending when you were the government.

SENTENCING

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is directed to the Attorney General. Recently, it's been reported that criminals convicted of serious offences have been able to serve their sentences in Ontario communities like Cobourg, Campbellville and Quinte West, instead of in a correctional facility. This is troubling to me and to my constituents, particularly when we've been doing so much in this province for security and looking after law and order. We've brought in 1,000 new police officers. We brought in Christopher's Law for the registry of sex offenders. We brought in rural crime teams. We brought in an enforcement unit to look after motorcycle gangs. We brought in community safety zones, protections against aggressive panhandling, the Victims' Bill of Rights, increased numbers of crown attorneys, increased numbers of special courts for domestic violence. We in-

roduced youth justice committees and tougher standards on parole, and we're expanding the DNA crime lab.

Can the minister please explain to the House why criminals are able to serve their sentences in the community instead of in jail?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member for Northumberland for the question on the serious matter of conditional sentences being used for serious and violent crimes in Ontario. In 1996 the federal Liberal government amended the Criminal Code to allow for conditional sentences. That type of sentence allows an offender who has been sentenced to two years less a day, and whose offence does not carry a minimum sentence, to serve their sentence in the community, which is fine except for the use from time to time, regrettably, of conditional sentences for serious and violent crimes in Ontario.

On January 31, this year, the Supreme Court of Canada decided that because of the wording of the Criminal Code as it is now in section 742.1, conditional sentences are available for those types of serious and violent crimes. The Liberal government in Ottawa can change that. They can amend the Criminal Code. They should have done it in 1996. We've been asking them to do it now. I wrote to the federal Minister of Justice on February 2. I asked her to bring in the amendments during the current sittings of the House of Commons. Why don't they do it? They're putting Ontario communities at risk.

Mr Galt: As a government, we are indeed committed to improving the safety and security of everyone in the province in all aspects of our lives. As you look at our budget, some of the things we're particularly committing to are \$35 million to community policing partnerships, \$2 million for special OPP teams to control computer crimes and another \$2 million for special OPP teams for snow trails and waterways, \$4 million for fighting organized crime, \$3 million for youth justice committee pilot projects, 165 new probation and parole officers, \$1 million to establish an office for the victims of crime, \$10 million to expand the domestic violence court program, and \$10 million for a program to support women and children experiencing domestic violence.

I'd like to know, what has the minister been doing to reduce the use of conditional sentencing in Ontario?

Hon Mr Flaherty: We're talking here about sexual assault. We're talking about sexual assault on children. We're talking about assault with weapons. We're talking about driving offences resulting in death and serious bodily injury. These are serious offences. Our view is that conditional sentences are not appropriate for serious and violent offences like the ones I have mentioned.

After the Supreme Court decision on January 31, as I indicated to the House, I wrote to the federal minister again. I asked her to take action. She has not done so yet. I hope she does so during the current sittings of the federal House of Commons. It's a simple amendment to

the Criminal Code. It can be done and it ought to be done to protect the people of Ontario.

In Ontario, I've done what we are able to do. On April 20 I issued a directive to Ontario's crown attorneys advising them that conditional sentences should not be recommended by the crown where the need to denounce and deter the offender's conduct is paramount in cases of serious—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The Attorney General's time is up.

1440

HEALTH CARE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): A question for the Acting Premier: There are over 100 communities in northern Ontario that are short of doctors. In fact they are short more than 450 doctors, and the problem with specialists is even worse. I looked at your budget. Your tuition fee proposal might put a doctor somewhere in northern Ontario in seven or eight years. It'll take longer for specialists. Your agreement with the Ontario Medical Association actually makes it more attractive for new doctors to locate in over-serviced areas, which makes it more difficult to get them to northern Ontario.

I looked in your budget for a little bit of money for a northern Ontario medical school so we could train our own. Nothing. Minister, when you had billions of dollars to give away to your corporate friends and to the most well-off in this province, can you tell us why you didn't care to do anything to solve the doctor shortage problem in northern Ontario?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): The leader of the third party knows this is a very serious problem, the doctor shortage, not just in northern Ontario, which is quite acute, but throughout rural Ontario as well. I think he should read the budget a little more carefully. There are a number of initiatives that are specifically designed to address the doctor supply issue across Ontario, and particularly in the underserved areas.

There is \$11 million annually to address the McKendry report. There is \$100 million to expand primary care, which will have an impact on addressing the physician supply. There is \$4 million for free tuition for students willing to practise in rural and northern areas. There is free tuition for medical students who relocate to under-serviced areas. These are all steps that are designed to address a very serious problem.

Clearly there is more that needs to be done—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. I'm afraid the member's time is up. Supplementary.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): Not only did your government do nothing to ensure that northern families who desperately need family doctors are going to get them soon, but you did nothing to resolve the discrimination that you're practising against northern cancer patients.

Minister, the chair of Cancer Care Ontario's northeast committee, Gerry Lougheed Jr, has been lobbying your government for months now to try and get your government to cover 100% of the costs of accommodation, food and travel for northern cancer patients too. Your minister yesterday provided a selective quote from 1999 from Mr Lougheed. I'm going to provide you some more recent quotes with respect to this very issue.

On April 29, in the Sudbury Star, Mr Lougheed said, "This government is practising a form of health care apartheid for patients in northern Ontario."

"The discrepancy between subsidies for northerners and southerners 'is a tremendous inequity. This is totally unacceptable, as far as I'm concerned.'

"We feel very frustrated that this has still not been addressed,' he said, adding Premier Mike Harris should consider intervening in the issue. 'I think the Premier has to be held accountable on this too, because he represents Nipissing riding and he is letting down northerners.'"

Minister, in your budget yesterday you had billions of dollars for your corporate friends. Why couldn't you find a little bit of money to ensure that northern cancer patients can access cancer care in our communities too?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I know the Minister of Northern Development and Mines has some information to share with this House.

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I am pleased to address in response. As members opposite know full well, this government has made major steps forward toward bringing better care to patients in northern Ontario. In fact, these efforts have produced 116 new specialists coming into northern Ontario.

A major initiative is the Soo cancer centre, a new initiative in northern Ontario; a new hospital in Thunder Bay, among others; and new pilot projects in northern Ontario in the telemedicine area. The Telehealth program has been such a success in northern Ontario that we're going to expand it to the rest of the province. It began in the north and we're learning from success in the north to address better care and primary care for patients in northern Ontario.

Speaking of Mr Lougheed, I have a note here from him addressed to Premier Harris in which he writes on the bottom, "Your government is doing an excellent job re regional cancer delivery programs."

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Minister of Education. You will recall that last month you appointed an investigator to go into the Windsor public board of education to determine why they were coming up with a \$6-million deficit. You know now that they have submitted that report to you, and what he said to you was, "I found things to be in excellent shape."

Minister, yesterday's budget provides no new money for the Windsor public board to deal with their deficit.

Could you explain to us today exactly what your plans are for the Windsor public board that has experienced a \$6-million deficit?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education): Only a Liberal could think \$400 million net new dollars to education for this coming school year is not going to have a benefit to all the different school boards.

First of all, we sent an investigator into that board to investigate why they were proposing to break the law. When that report has been reviewed, we will certainly be discussing what we will be doing with the recommendations from the investigator.

Mrs Pupatello: Minister, you sent an investigator in because they have a \$6-million deficit because of your funding formula.

Today in this House, the students from W.D. Lowe are here. They're right behind your head; they're right upstairs. You remember meeting with students of W.D. Lowe because their high school is closing. You sat down around the table and looked at them eye to eye while they explained personally what they have been dealing with because of your funding formula.

Yesterday's budget has \$130 million less for elementary and secondary school students, and you know it, so don't come forward with numbers in the House today. I am asking you specifically. Your investigator said: "I found things to be in excellent shape." What are you proposing to do for the Windsor public board, which is running a tight ship and whose students are here today and want to hear what you have to say to them about helping our Windsor public board?

Hon Mrs Ecker: First of all, perhaps the honourable member might have done these students the courtesy of telling them that today was not the day that any announcements or decisions were going to be made about Windsor. It might have been a courtesy to tell them that before you get them all excited about something and drag them down to Queen's Park and make them part of a media photo op.

Interjections.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Secondly, every community values its schools. That was the same when we had one-room schools around this province; they value their schools very much.

Mrs Pupatello: "I found things to be in excellent shape."

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Minister, take a seat. Stop the clock.

The member for Windsor West, I've warned you before. I'm sorry. I'm going to have to name you and ask you to leave. You can't shout across. You were warned before. I know you've got some folks here, but unfortunately, when I give you a last warning, I have to stick to it if you shout across. I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

Mrs Pupatello left the chamber.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I appreciate that the honourable member cares about her community, like every community cares about their schools. It's never an easy

decision for school boards when they have to live within their budgets. That's not new. They've had to do that before and they will always have to do that. It's a very difficult decision for trustees to make.

But what this government is also doing is we are putting \$459 million in new dollars into education—yet again, more money into education—so that all boards can continue to benefit from increased funding and so that we can do an even better job of giving what I know parents want, teachers want and students want, the best-quality education that we can possibly give them.

1450

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, as you know, the mining industry is a major factor in Ontario's prosperity. The strength of the mining sector is particularly important to the economic viability of northern regions of Ontario where so many communities have a rich mining history. I want to tell you that in Perth-Middlesex there is a lot of open-pit aggregate mining as well.

Can you explain for the Legislature what effect yesterday's announcement to cut the mining tax will have on northern mining communities?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): As the member from Perth-Middlesex remembers, in our Voice for the North policy document in the run-up to the previous campaign in 1995, we committed that we wouldn't touch mining taxes and fees until the budget was balanced and that we'd then look to lowering taxes in the mining sector once we had achieved that. A promise made, a promise kept once again.

Yesterday we announced a 50% reduction in the mining tax, which is the lowest tax rate now in all of Canada, towards our goal of making sure that Ontario is the safest and most attractive jurisdiction in which to invest for mineral investment. Again, a promise made, a promise kept.

Mr Johnson: You're right, Minister; our government has proven that tax cuts create jobs. I'm reminded that only four and a half years ago the chant from across the way was: "Where are the jobs? Where are the jobs?" And today here we are, 700,000 more than in 1995.

Aside from cutting the Ontario mining tax rate, what other initiatives did yesterday's budget announce to help the mining sector and assist mining communities to reach their full potential?

Hon Mr Hudak: There is no doubt that yesterday's budget was worth its weight in gold for the mining industry. Not only did we slash the mining tax by 50%, we have a tax-free holiday now of 10 years for new remote mines in the province, a 50% further cut in the mining tax beyond that, and a focused flow-through share program made for Ontario to encourage grassroots exploration and development in northern Ontario—a proposal, I may add, that was brought to the federal

government on repeated occasions and that keeps getting rejected by the federal Liberal government. I'm going to call on members from northern Ontario on all sides of the House to support the federal government in moving to match what Ontario is doing to promote mining and exploration and prospecting in the province.

I want to read one quote from the Ontario Mining Association. Patrick Reid, the president, says: "When this government came into office it made a commitment to reduce taxes which impact the mining industry once the budget was balanced. These measures prove that the government was true to its word in honouring that commitment to the mining industry." Promise made, promise kept.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): My question is for the Minister of Northern Development. Northern Ontario mayors met with the Minister of Health this morning to ask for support for a new medical school in northern Ontario. They came in under the impression that your government had made a commitment to adding new medical school spaces in yesterday's budget, and it's no wonder they had the impression. I'll remind you what the Minister of Finance said yesterday. He said, "I'm announcing today that we will implement Dr Robert McKendry's recommendations to increase the number of spaces for medical students." The budget paper says there is \$11 million to increase the number of spaces for medical students.

Today we learned there are no new medical school spaces. The \$11 million is for last year's announcement of 12 more spaces for foreign-trained doctors and to expand retraining programs for doctors already in practice. There is not a single dollar in this budget for a single new space for a new medical school student.

Minister, this shortage of doctors is one of the most serious issues facing northern Ontario communities. Why would your government not only ignore the need but insult us by trying to trick us?

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I mentioned earlier—I guess the member wasn't listening—the steps this government has taken to address the issue of physician undersupply, a long-standing issue that quite frankly the parties opposite, the Liberals and the NDP, did not address in their time in office. This government has brought 115 new specialists to northern Ontario. In the member's own riding of Thunder Bay there's a new state-of-the-art hospital. In Sudbury there's a major reinvestment in health care. The Telehealth initiative is bringing better primary care to northern Ontario. And yes, we have the McKendry report. An expert panel is considering what Dr McKendry has recommended, to investigate what the best and the brightest minds in the province have to say to advance what we're already done for the industry, which is far more than they even thought of doing when they were in government.

Mrs McLeod: I have an article from today's Thunder Bay Chronicle-Journal. It says, "Hudak Lists the Benefits for the Northwest." It says here that there will be \$11 million to increase enrolment in Ontario medical schools. There is not a single penny to increase enrolment in medical schools. It says here that there will be free tuition for medical students who plan to practise in northern Ontario. Minister, you know very well that this is for medical school students who plan to practise in any of 100 underserviced communities right across this province. You can support at best 100 students a year with that program. That's one per community, and that will not solve the problem.

The worst insult for northerners was that you could not find, in a budget with at least \$4 billion worth of tax cuts, even a few million dollars to improve the northern health travel grant. I listened when you answered earlier, Minister. You basically said northern cancer patients could be helped with a teleconference. You can't cure cancer with a telephone call.

Northerners, when it comes to health care, have been insulted, they've been ignored and they have been lied to. Couldn't you at least find a few dollars for the northern health travel grant?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I would ask the member to withdraw the word "lied."

Mrs McLeod: I withdraw the term, but my question stands.

Hon Mr Hudak: I would suggest to the member opposite, who happened to lead her party for I guess a few months and then was—it led to a tragic defeat, I guess, for that party. Maybe the anger should be directed at herself. Where were you as the sitting Liberal government, where were you as the leader of your party that let this province flounder, that did nothing for underserviced areas in Ontario? Coming from Thunder Bay—a new hospital is coming there. Why weren't you out there for the new hospital? Why weren't you advocating for that when you were in government? It took Mike Harris and the Conservative Party to build that new hospital in Thunder Bay, to bring a new cancer centre to Sault Ste Marie, to make these major steps that—

The Speaker: Minister take his seat. New question.

TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): My question is for the Minister of Tourism. Although there have been some very positive gains made in Ontario in terms of the number of visitors coming to our province and in terms of the revenues their business has generated, I understand there are also some signs that there could be a slowdown in the coming years.

The tourism industry provides many job opportunities in my community and is a high-growth economic sector. Clearly it is critical that this government take steps now to address this problem so as to avoid Ontario losing tourism revenues in the future. Can the Minister of

Tourism inform this House what he is doing to address this issue?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Tourism): I'd like to thank the member for his question because we do face a challenge in this province. Globally, tourism is going up. The amount of tourism in the global economy is actually going to triple over the next 10 years, and as such, Ontario has to get its fair share. In fact, we've not been doing as well as our neighbour Quebec, which has had about a 4% increase. We've only had about a 1% increase. That's why our government has responded with a four-year, \$120-million commitment to marketing our great province and why yesterday's budget included an additional \$50 million over the next four years so that we can stay competitive in this growing industry.

We support about 500,000 tourism-related jobs in this province. We know we can produce more jobs as a result of it. I also want to thank the Treasurer for the \$300-million fund for the SuperBuild sports, culture and tourism partnership that my colleague and I look forward to investing in growing jobs in Ontario.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Broadview-Greenwood): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I regret that I couldn't get to my question but that is not my point of order. My niece Virginia Roberts who just graduated with a BSc from Dalhousie University is visiting me and she is in the gallery today.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I also am sorry that, with her being here, she didn't get to her question, but unfortunately we did not. We welcome her. It's not a point of order, though.

PETITIONS

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas essential public services have been deprived of government funding because the Conservative government of Mike Harris has diverted these funds to self-serving propaganda in the form of pamphlets delivered to homes, newspaper advertisements and radio and TV commercials;

"Whereas the Harris government advertising blitz is a blatant abuse of public office and a shameful waste of taxpayers' dollars;

"Whereas the Harris Conservatives ran on a platform of eliminating what it referred to as 'government waste and unnecessary expenditures,' while it squanders over \$100 million on clearly partisan advertising;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Conservative government and Mike Harris to immediately end their abuse of public office and terminate any further expenditure on political advertising."

I affix my signature as I'm in complete agreement with sentiments of this petition.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were responsible for terrorizing entire communities in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario government of the day made a deal with the devil with Karla Homolka resulting in a sentence that does not truly make her pay for her crimes; and

"Whereas our communities have not yet fully recovered from the trauma and sadness caused by Karla Homolka; and

"Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to passes to leave prison with an escort; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario believe that criminals should be forced to serve sentences that reflect the seriousness of their crimes;

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

"That the government of Ontario will:

"Do everything within its power to ensure that Karla Homolka serves her full sentence;

"Continue to reform parole and make it more difficult for serious offenders to return to our streets;

"Fight the federal government's plan to release up to 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets; and

"Ensure that the Ontario government's sex offender registry is functioning as quickly as possible."

I'm pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

1500

DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reads like this:

"Whereas Ontarians with a developmental disability are in growing danger of inadequate support because compensation to staff of not-for-profit agencies is, based on a recent survey, on average, 20% to 25% less than compensation for others doing the same work in provincial institutions or similar work in their settings; and

"Whereas there are hundreds of senior parents in Ontario who saved the Ontario government millions of dollars by keeping their child with a developmental disability at home, and who are still caring for their adult child;

"Whereas there is no place for most of these adults with a developmental disability to go when the parents are no longer able to provide care;

"Whereas these parents live with constant anxiety and despair;

"Whereas these adult children will end up in Ontario's nursing homes and hospitals if there is no appropriate place to provide care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"To significantly increase compensation for workers in not-for-profit agencies so that it is comparable to the compensation of government-funded workers in identical or similar occupations; and

"To provide the resources necessary to give appropriate support to Ontarians with a developmental disability who at present have no place to go when their parents are no longer able to care for them."

I affix my signature. There are thousands who have signed this.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I am pleased to present further petitions collected by Cecil Mackasey and Rick Roberts of CAW Local 222 and forwarded to me by Buzz Hargrove, president of the CAW Canada.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas this year 130,000 Canadians will contract cancer and there are at minimum 17 funerals every day for Canadian workers who died from cancer caused by workplace exposure to cancer-causing substances known as carcinogens; and

"Whereas the World Health Organization estimates that 80% of all cancers have environmental causes and the International Labour Organization estimates that one million workers globally have cancer because of exposure at work to carcinogens; and

"Whereas most cancers can be beaten if government had the political will to make industry replace toxic substances with non-toxic substances; and

"Whereas very few health organizations study the link between occupations and cancer, even though more study of this link is an important step to defeating this dreadful disease;

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

"That it become a legal requirement that occupational history be recorded on a standard form when a patient presents at a physician for diagnosis or treatment of cancer and that the diagnosis and occupational history be forwarded to a central cancer registry for analysis as to the link between cancer and occupation."

On behalf of my NDP colleagues I add my name to those of the petitioners.

HIGHWAY 407

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I am pleased to present a petition on behalf of constituents in the riding of Durham, and that list would include Ruth Hinkley, Troy Young and others. I'll read it to the Legislature of Ontario.

“Whereas the province of Ontario exempted Highway 407 east from a public hearing and then passed the Highway 407 Act to further exempt the proposed highway extension from important provincial environmental laws, such as the Ontario Water Resources Act, the Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act and the fill regulations of the Conservation Authorities Act; and

“Whereas heavy equipment is now being used to clear the eastern path of the highway, without any environmental guidelines, control or monitoring;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislature of Ontario, as a matter of extreme urgency, to put in place such environmental monitoring procedures and controls as are necessary to prevent extreme degradation such as bulldozers working in stream beds, and numerous other environmentally destructive acts that have been witnessed since the 407 east extension was permitted to go ahead.”

I am pleased to present the petition and affix my signature to it.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

“Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that the costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents and therefore that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

“Whereas travel, accommodation and other costs have escalated sharply since the program was first put in place, particularly in the area of air travel; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

“Whereas northern Ontario residents should not receive a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographical locations;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in our communities.”

I have the signatures of 230 very frustrated, getting angrier and angrier, constituents, and I will affix my signature in full agreement with their frustration.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were responsible for terrorizing entire communities in southern Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ontario government of the day made a deal with the devil with Karla Homolka resulting in a sentence that does not truly make her pay for her crimes; and

“Whereas our communities have not yet fully recovered from the trauma and sadness caused by Karla Homolka; and

“Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to passes to leave prison with an escort; and

“Whereas the people of Ontario believe that criminals should be forced to serve sentences that reflect the seriousness of their crimes;

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

“That the government of Ontario will:

“Do everything within its power to ensure that Karla Homolka serves her full sentence;

“Continue to reform parole and make it more difficult for serious offenders to return to our streets;

“Fight the federal government’s plan to release up to 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets; and

“Ensure that the Ontario government’s sex offender registry is functioning as quickly as possible.”

I am pleased to affix my name to it.

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I have a petition that I’m pleased to present on behalf of the member for Thunder Bay-Superior North, and I am in complete agreement with the petition. It is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the northern health travel grant was introduced in 1987 in recognition of the fact that northern Ontario residents are often forced to receive treatment outside their own communities because of the lack of available services; and

“Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged that the costs associated with that travel should not be fully borne by those residents and therefore that financial support should be provided by the Ontario government through the travel grant program; and

“Whereas travel, accommodation and other costs have escalated sharply since the program was first put in place, particularly in the area of air travel; and

“Whereas the Ontario government has provided funds so that southern Ontario patients needing care at the Northwestern Ontario Cancer Centre have all their expenses paid while receiving treatment in the north which creates a double standard for health care delivery in the province; and

"Whereas northern Ontario residents should not receive a different level of health care nor be discriminated against because of their geographical locations;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned citizens of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to acknowledge the unfairness and inadequacy of the northern health travel grant program and commit to a review of the program with a goal of providing 100% funding of the travel costs for residents needing care outside their communities until such time as that care is available in our communities."

It is signed by approximately 100 individuals and I am in complete agreement with this petition as it, in effect, bans discrimination in this province.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Respectfully I read this petition for the pleasure of the members here and on behalf of my constituents.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the prayer, Our Father, also called the Lord's Prayer, has always been used to open the proceedings of municipal chambers and the Ontario Legislative Assembly since the beginning of Upper Canada under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe in the 18th century; and

"Whereas such use of the Lord's Prayer is part of Ontario's long-standing heritage and a tradition that continues to play a significant role in contemporary Ontario life;

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer is a most meaningful expression of the religious convictions of many Ontarians;

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

"That the Parliament of Ontario maintain the use of the Lord's Prayer in its proceedings, in accordance with its long-standing established custom, and do all in its power to maintain the use of this prayer in municipal chambers in the province of Ontario."

I'm pleased to support and sign this petition, respectfully, in the province of Ontario.

1510

DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): "To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontarians with a developmental disability are in growing danger of inadequate support because compensation to staff of not-for-profit agencies is, based on a recent survey, on average, 20% to 25% less than compensation for doing the same work in provincial institutions or similar work in other settings;

"Whereas there are hundreds of senior parents in Ontario who saved the Ontario government millions of dollars by keeping their child with a developmental disability at home, and who are still caring for their adult child; and

"Whereas there is no place for most of these adults with a developmental disability to go when the parents are no longer able to provide care;

"Whereas these parents live with constant anxiety and despair;

"Whereas these adult children will end up in Ontario nursing homes and hospitals if there is no appropriate place to provide care;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"To significantly increase compensation for workers in not-for-profit agencies so it is comparable to the compensation of government-funded workers in identical or similar occupations; and

"To provide the resources necessary to give appropriate support to Ontarians with a developmental disability who at present have no place to go when their parents are no longer able to care for them."

With great pride, I take my pen with five seconds left and add my name to this fine petition.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Further petitions? The Chair recognizes the member for Halton.

KARLA HOMOLKA

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): Thank you, Mr Speaker, especially after that very slow one you heard before.

I have a petition to the Legislation Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Karla Homolka and Paul Bernardo were responsible for terrorizing entire communities in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario government of the day made a deal with the devil with Karla Homolka resulting in a sentence that does not truly make her pay for her crimes; and

"Whereas our communities have not yet fully recovered from the trauma and sadness caused by Karla Homolka; and

"Whereas Karla Homolka believes that she should be entitled to passes to leave prison with an escort; and

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"That the government of Ontario will:

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"Fight the federal government's plan to release up to 1,600 more convicted criminals on to Ontario streets; and

"Ensure that the Ontario government's sex offender registry is functioning as quickly as possible."

I'm pleased to add my name to this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2000 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 2, 2000, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): It gives me great pleasure to present to you on behalf of our party, the official opposition, our response to the government's budget. I want to do this by doing three things in particular.

First, I want to tell you where we stand, where our party stands. I'm going to spell out what we believe needs to be done to secure lasting prosperity that all Ontarians can share in.

Second, I'm going to assess yesterday's budget, because I believe that it clearly failed to use today's wealth to secure tomorrow's prosperity.

Finally, through you, I'm going to invite the public to take a hard look at the government's real economic record and what it means for our province over the long term. I'm going to use that phrase repeatedly today, "the long-term sustainable prosperity," making sure that our children can enjoy all the kinds of opportunities they're going to need. I'll make countless references to those things because we believe they're so very important to our economic future.

To begin, we believe in an approach to our economy and our finances that will keep our province competitive over the long term. That means improving front-line health care, boosting higher education and delivering tax fairness. It's high time we had what I call 24-7 health care here in Ontario. That means access to the best medical advice and care 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Under that kind of system, family doctors would work in teams with nurses, nurse practitioners and other health care professionals, so that someone from their health care team would be available around the clock.

The other day my daughter, who is now 18, turned to me and said: "Bankers' hours? What does that mean?" I said: "You know, that's a quaint phrase. It comes from a time long ago when banks were open between the hours of 10 and 3. If you wanted to do banking that day, you had to get there between the hours of 10 and 3." She found this very strange because she can bank 24 hours a day, on-line or by telephone. I also have three sons who like to order pizza. When they order their pizza 24 hours a day, seven days a week, they make a call and the person at the other end knows their phone number, their address and their history when it comes to what they like on their pizza.

The point I'm making is that if we can get that kind of service for things that are as unimportant as ordering a pizza, and in many ways as unimportant as banking, then surely we should be able to transform our 1960s-style health care system into one that's much better suited to meet our 21st century needs. That's what 24-7 health

care is all about. That's why we've been pushing for it so strongly. We think it's absolutely essential to modernize health care in Ontario because I am personally convinced—and I hope government members understand the gravity of the situation—that if we don't modernize our health care, we are going to lose our health care.

We also believe that with all of this money rolling in—the finance minister tells us we've taken in \$5 billion more in revenue than had been originally anticipated—with us riding the back of the American wave south of the border, surely we should have been able to find some money to invest in higher education. In the new knowledge-based economy, the best-educated workforce attracts the best jobs and the best jobs earn the most money, which makes the greatest contribution to our economy. That's what it's all about. Investing in our colleges and universities is not only the right thing to do for our young people, it's the best possible thing we might do for our economy.

I want to make reference to a paper which I strongly recommend all members of this Legislature take the time to read. It's about 30 pages in length and it's written by Michael Porter, who heads up the business school at Harvard, and his counterpart here at the University of Toronto, Roger Martin. This was a document that was prepared somewhat like a report card on how well our economy here in Canada is faring. These two senior economists tell us some things which I believe are very important, and there's every reason to believe, based on the contents of this document, that the members of the government are not familiar with it. I just want to take the time to read a couple of passages because they are very important.

On page 26 of this document entitled *Canadian Competitiveness: Nine Years After the Crossroads*. It says, "Investments in education, training and specialized skills upgrading have among the highest payoff of any investment government can make in improving the micro-economic environment for business."

1520

What they're telling us is that there is a direct link between investment in higher education, investment in our young people and our continuing ability to prosper.

They also say, "It is interesting to note that seven of the top 10 countries on the innovation index"—and I might tell you that an innovation index measures a nation's ability to produce and exploit innovation over time; basically it tells you how competitive you are—"increased their spending on higher education over the 1975 to 1995 period, while Canada and two others did not. On average, the former seven increased their GDP per capita by 50% over that same period and the latter three by only 33%."

Again, there is a direct relationship between investing in higher education and general economic prosperity. That's what this government, unfortunately, doesn't get.

Finally, with respect to taxes, we believe it is essential that we deliver lower taxes, yes, but we must also deliver fair taxes. What that means to us is that it's essential to

target most of our tax relief at those people who need it the most—our middle-class families and our working poor. When we share the wealth with the people who produce and consume the products and services, we help ensure lasting prosperity.

That's what Liberals stand for: modernizing our health care, boosting higher education and targeting tax cuts to the middle class and working poor to ensure lasting prosperity.

Just so the government members, who are obviously failing to understand the importance of this, really get it, I want to speak to the issue of tax fairness for a moment. We can't sustain prosperity, and I don't want to live in a province, to be perfectly frank, where we're leaving so many people behind. Homelessness in Ontario is up. Child poverty is up. Poverty, generally speaking, is up. Mike Harris has managed to do something which is in many ways unprecedented in the annals of economic history. He has managed to uncouple growth in GDP from the general advancement of our population. He's not making sure that we all move forward together.

I can tell you that what that means at the end of the day is that our choice here in Ontario is between protection and protectionism. Let me tell you what I mean by that. It means protecting our people from the worst aspects of globalization because if we don't, they are going to turn against globalization. They're going to say: "I want the trade walls back up because we can't find our place in this brave new world. We're not finding success in this new economy, so I'm against globalization." And you know what? We can't turn the clock back on that.

But our responsibility here is to make sure that everybody finds success in this new economy, and that's not happening in Mike Harris's Ontario. If we don't protect our people, look out for their interests and make sure that they can find opportunity, make sure they get quality health care, make sure they can all afford to go on to quality public universities, if we don't do those things, then they're going to demand it. Protectionism. They're going to demand that we turn the clock back on globalization. They're going to demand that we put up trade walls again. That would not be a good thing.

Let's take a look at yesterday's budget. At the outset, as might be expected, I looked at many of the newscasts and saw a lot of the print reportage and many of the headlines are titillated with this notion of a \$200 tax cut to be delivered to each and every taxpayer in the comfort of their own home.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Copied from the US.

Mr McGuinty: It's interesting that this is nothing new. As my colleague says, this has been used in the United States. Jesse Ventura in Minnesota, Tom Ridge in Pennsylvania, among other Republican-style governors, have used this notion and it just strikes me as being so American. Do you know what I mean by that? I mean it has such an individualist appeal.

We're saying to Ontarians, "Look, here's \$200 for each of you." When you add up all those cheques, do you

know what you get? You get \$1 billion. Do you know what we could do with \$1 billion here in Ontario? We could make sure that there's room for our kids in universities. We could make sure that we've got quality health care. Why is it that this government is so intent on separating us and driving us apart when historically our real strengths in this province have always been when we have pulled together.

I can tell you I am absolutely convinced that if you were to knock on Ontario doors and say to people: "Listen, Mike Harris is sending you a \$200 cheque. Do you want a \$200 cheque or do you want quality public education at the university level for your children and your grandchildren? Do you want a \$200 cheque or do you want quality health care there for yourself and your children and your grandchildren? Do you want a \$200 cheque or do you want us to begin to invest in a responsible way in public transit so that we can not only rid ourselves of gridlock but we can do much more to protect the quality of air that our children are breathing? Do you want a \$200 cheque or do you not feel sense of responsibility to help those people who will be sleeping on the streets of Ontario tonight," if we were to put the case to Ontarians in that reasoned, intelligent, caring and compassionate way, they would respond the Ontario way. They would say, "I am for doing those things that help ensure that we all move forward together."

The budget that was delivered yesterday fails to use today's wealth to secure tomorrow's prosperity. Despite all the rhetoric about brighter futures, the budget fails the future. One of the members opposite says, "Spend, spend, spend." Well, you know, we've got \$5 billion in additional revenues that this government did not originally anticipate having and they are spending like crazy. They're spending \$4 billion on corporate tax cuts. They're spending \$650 million on tax cuts for those people who play the stock markets. So let's not give people the wrong impression here. These people are spending. The problem is they're spending in the wrong kind of way. They're not spending in a way that's going to assure us all of a bright future.

The money is rolling in. God bless the United States of America. I think it is time that we all give credit where credit is due. It's important that we give credit where credit is due. It's time that we paid tribute to the founder of our economic fortunes and I want to do that today. Thank you, Alan Greenspan, chairman of the US Federal Reserve Board.

The real issue here is what are we doing with our economic good fortune? Surely that's the real issue, right? The problem with this government is that they are squandering this fortune. They are missing an opportunity to shore up our future success. They may think it's somewhat humorous, but I can tell you it is completely out of keeping with our traditions in Ontario, which have always dictated that we collectively share responsibility for those people who are coming behind us. I'm not ashamed to say that. I'm not ashamed to say that fundamentally is the reason I got into politics in the first

place: to make sure that all of those benefits, all of those successes that I was fortunate enough to be able to encounter in life we can work together and make sure are available for our children and our grandchildren.

1530

The fact of the matter is, this budget fails to improve front-line health care, it is neglecting higher education and it does not deliver on tax fairness.

How can a budget that talks about brighter futures neglect the things that we need to ensure lasting prosperity? It talks about higher education, but the fact is this government's own numbers show that it's actually spending \$200 million less on the operating costs for our universities and colleges than they did five years ago. How can a budget that talks about brighter futures fail front-line health care? It talks about an increase in spending, but the money is spread so thinly there is no evidence whatsoever that it's going to have any real impact on improving care here in Ontario.

We hear talk now that apparently we're going to have 80% of our family doctors enrolled in primary care reform. Well, I will believe it when I see it. Something this government fails to understand is that if we really want to move forward on 24-7 health care in Ontario, you can't just talk to doctors; you need nurse practitioners, you need nurses, you need other health care professionals and you need consumer advocates. I can tell you that the process that is in place now, where we have doctors who are locked behind closed doors together with government officials charting a course for the future of medicare in Ontario, is one that is not going to deliver at the end of the day. I won't believe that this government is genuinely committed to 24-7 health care until I see in place a process that involves nurse practitioners and nurses and other health care professionals and consumer representatives. Until that process is in place, it tells me they are not really committed; they are more prepared to simply talk in the abstract about it.

They don't even make any pretence, as far as I'm concerned, about tax fairness in this budget. There is a \$4-billion tax break for corporations. I'm all for lowering business taxes, but surely some of that money could have been devoted to health care reform and higher education and helping our homeless and investments in public transit—in our other areas that are so important for Ontarians to be able to move forward together. There's a \$650-million break for those wealthy enough to speculate on the stock market, but there is very little for our struggling middle class, who are only managing to tread water, and our working poor, who are falling more and more behind.

Let me tell you something about this race to reduce corporate income taxes. It's a race that's taking place not only here in North America but throughout many parts of the world. It's a race we can't win. Mike Harris is telling us that in six years' time our corporate income tax rates here will be lower than our North American counterparts. I can tell you that the governors south of us have today learned about the details of this budget and they'll be

making commitments very shortly to beat us when it comes to reducing their rates of corporate income taxes. We can't win on that score. What the experts are telling us is that if we want to find continuing success in this new economy, we are not going to find it in imitation, we're not going to find it in replication. We are going to find it in innovation. Innovation is harder, it presents a greater challenge, but at the end of the day they should understand that it is more rewarding. That's the foundation for a strong economy in this new economy. It's not imitation. It's not a race to the bottom.

I have had the opportunity to visit some cities south of the border recently, and I can tell you that there is something there I really like. There is a sense of entrepreneurialism in the air that is almost electric; you can almost touch it. And those are good things. We should do what we can to see how we might instill that in our people up here. It's a competitive world. We want Ontarians to embrace all of the opportunities and we want them to bring to it an entrepreneurial zeal and zest.

Having said that, do you know what I don't like, and this is why I'm not inspired by American tax regimes? I don't like the fact that they've got the highest rate of child poverty in the developed world: 25%. I don't like the fact that there are 44 million American citizens who will go to sleep tonight without any health care coverage of any kind, including 11 million under the age of 12. I don't like the fact, and this is something that is near and dear to the government's heart, that 40% of Americans keep a gun at home because they fear for their own safety and security. I don't like those aspects of what is happening with our neighbours to the south. That's why I am not prepared to have their tax regime as an ideal that inspires our efforts. I think we can do something better. It's called innovation.

This budget fails to modernize health care, it fails to improve higher education and it fails to make our taxes fairer as well as lower.

Speaker, I want to invite you as well as government members, who are now listening attentively, to look beyond this morning's headlines at the government's real record. In some ways we are living through one of the most exciting times in our history in this province. We are living through a revolution, an economic, social and technology revolution, and it's presenting all kinds of opportunities. We're able to ride the American slipstream and capitalize on all the expansion that has been taking place. That's wonderful.

Let's take a real close look at what's happening here in Ontario. We know that our middle class families are working longer and harder than ever before, but they are not getting ahead. Their real incomes are not increasing. They are working longer and harder but their real incomes are not increasing, and I can tell you why. One of the problems they're facing, of course, is that they are facing increased costs for private health care. This government—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Order. I can't have this talking back and forth. If you feel it necessary, please remove yourself from the House so I don't have to do it for you. I want to have the attention of the House on the person who has the floor. In this case, it's the Leader of the Opposition and I recognize him.

Mr McGuinty: Thank you for your intervention, Speaker. If only they all had the same sense of appreciation for my words as you do.

Laughter.

Mr McGuinty: What are you laughing at?

Not only is our middle class struggling just to stay in place, but our working poor are falling further and further behind. Child poverty is up 118% since 1989. Food bank usage is up 258%. Among our homeless population, the fastest-growing group is mothers and children. How can this possibly be happening in this time of economic expansion? We're living through a boom. How is it possible that we are leaving so many people behind? More pointedly, how is it possible that when we had \$5 billion in additional dollars, if we have \$4 billion in tax cuts for our corporations and \$650 million over here for those who like to play the stocks, if all of that is happening, if that's our economic context, how can we possibly be leaving so many Ontarians behind? Poverty is up during an economic boom.

1540

You know what else? Our debt is up. This government has added \$24 billion to the province's debt since it was first elected. It did that by borrowing for tax cuts before the budget was balanced. That's one of the reasons we have been so critical of this government's previous tax cuts. They went to international markets and borrowed at prime-plus to deliver premature tax cuts. In total, we're talking about an additional \$10 billion in debt which we are saddling our children with. Now, I don't claim to be prescient, I don't claim to be able to see into the future, but I can say with absolute certainty that our children will never, ever thank Mike Harris for giving this government and this government's friends a \$10-billion tax cut which was borrowed at international markets at prime-plus. They will never thank them for doing that.

It seems to me that if we're going to enjoy lasting prosperity, if you want to secure our future, one of the things we should be doing is making every effort not to add to the debt. This government has added \$24 billion to the debt. They like to lay claim to a monopoly on fiscal responsibility, but the facts belie that.

What we should be doing when it comes to the future is making sure that our kids and their grandchildren have as much fiscal freedom as possible, but what this government has done by adding \$24 billion to the debt has tied their hands for years and years and years to come. They are going to be obligated now to make debt and interest payments on the \$24 billion that they've added to the provincial debt.

Let me tell you, again on the matter of the debt, that the debt has now grown here in Ontario to \$114 billion. That's a triple-digit billion-dollar debt: \$114 billion.

That's the first triple-digit debt in Ontario's history. That is their real and lasting claim to fame. That's a wonderful legacy for our children.

Now the budget is finally balanced, but let's put this, as well, in some context. In the race to balance budgets in Canada, take a look at the 10 provinces that were in this race and the one federal government. Where do you think Ontario placed? Didn't get the gold. Didn't get the silver. Didn't get the bronze. Didn't come fourth. Didn't come fifth. Didn't come sixth. Didn't come seventh. Didn't come eighth. Didn't come ninth. We came 10th. Hooray; we came 10th. When the last competitor comes into the stadium and it's dark at night and there's hardly anybody left in the stands, and they've got the lights out and they're packing up, I guess the nice thing to do is to congratulate this second-to-last competitor.

As they crow about the fact that they've balanced the budget, let's put this into some real perspective. We could have balanced the budget two or three years ago, but the government insisted on adding to the deficit by borrowing for a premature tax cut.

These premature tax cuts have hurt us in other ways. If you look at all of the provinces and all of the American states, we finish 59th out of 60 jurisdictions when it comes to boosting investment in our universities. Quebec and Ontario are the only jurisdictions that have cut their investment in universities. Every other jurisdiction has increased investment, because they know that the best-educated workforce attracts the best jobs. We understand. To use the common parlance, we get it. They don't get it. We get it. If you want to ensure that we can all enjoy lasting prosperity, not only do you invest in the next generation because it's the right thing to do, you invest in the next generation because it's a virtual guarantee of sustained economic prosperity.

If you take a look at what's happening among all of the provinces here in Canada, we rank second-last in investment per student in our universities. When it comes to charging the highest tuition, we rank second from the top, second only to Nova Scotia. Think about this for a minute here. We've got 60 jurisdictions in North America and we are right near the bottom. This adult generation is right near the bottom in terms of the amount that we're prepared to invest in the next generation. On the other hand, we are right near the top when it comes to the amount that we are prepared to charge the youngest generation and their families to go on to university. That's where we find ourselves today. You know what this government's response is? Incredible as it seems, this government says that the solution to that echo generation which is marching through our primary and secondary schools and will shortly be knocking on university doors is, "We're throwing the doors open to private universities." Private universities.

I ask government members to ask themselves, had that been the approach taken by previous generations of governments, how many of us here would have been able to afford to go on to university? How many of us here would be enjoying the quality of life that we are so

fortunate to be able to enjoy today in Ontario if the previous generations took that approach to us? So I say it again, Speaker, and I say this looking at the eight pages sitting at your feet, don't we have a responsibility to keep the doors open for them? I don't care where they come from. I don't care how long they've been here or who they're connected to or how wealthy their parents are. Don't we share a collective responsibility to keep the doors to affordable public universities open to them and their generation? Instead of turning our public universities around, this government is turning its back on our public universities. That's what they're really doing.

They've also turned their back on the modernization of medicare. This government would prefer to fight over health care and use taxpayer dollars to do that rather than work together to fight for health care. We believe we should be fighting for our health care. We believe that medicare is at risk. Let me tell you what our take is on medicare. It has to be the single most eloquent and elegant metaphor for Canada. It says everything about us. It says everything about our values. We're talking about the way that we treat our sick and our most vulnerable. It says everything about who we are, but most important, it says everything about what we aspire to be. It surely is the most noble and honourable ideal that has ever evolved here in Canada. That is something that informs our thinking, it inspires our efforts and we will never, ever set aside our responsibility to fight for quality medicare here in Ontario. And on top of that, it's not simply a matter of values, although that, in and of itself, is more than enough. Medicare happens to give us a distinct, competitive advantage.

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What we've decided to do in this province is that instead of our going to our insurance companies on an individual basis and seeking insurance coverage, or instead of a few dozen of us getting together and saying, "You want to reduce costs; we'll go together," we've decided in this country that 30 million of us are going together, that 30 million of us are going to move forward on this and that we're going to ensure we have in place a health care system providing universal coverage.

What that happens to do as a side benefit, and it's a wonderful benefit in this competitive global economy, is it gives our businesses a real edge. We can roll a car off the assembly line here in Ontario—remember, the auto sector is still the foundation of our economy, as my colleagues from Windsor remind me on an ongoing basis—for close to \$1,500 less than they can south of the border. Do you know why that is? It's because of medicare, because of public health care.

There was a study done. It is the definitive study on this matter. It was done in March 1999 by the Conference Board of Canada. For the first time, it compared apples to apples. They compared businesses with both Canadian and American operations. They confirmed that in every instance we enjoyed a tremendous advantage as the result of our public health care, our medicare system.

I'm not sure if Ontarians recognize and realize, and I'm not sure if government members understand, that today in Canada no group of people pays more for private health care, no group of people spends more on private health care than Ontarians do. Ontario families are paying a lot more today for private health care. Ontario's businesses are paying a lot more today for private health care. That's not only reducing our competitive edge, it is a stealthy erosion of our commitment to medicare. That's one of the reasons it's so important for us to modernize medicare. We think it's time to put the brakes on that development. We think it's time to become re-inspired by the medicare ideal.

If the Premier had simply followed the lead of his pal Premier Ralph Klein he could've balanced the budget first and then given out tax cuts. He even could've started paying down the debt. While he was at it, he could've used some of the surplus to invest in health care and education. Then we'd be sitting pretty in the year 2000 with the best of all possible worlds: a balanced budget for the last two years, a shrinking debt, modernized health care, superb higher education and tax relief that really helps middle class and working poor families.

But that's not what he did. To drive the matter home, we in the Ontario Liberal Party have a decidedly different approach, one that will ensure lasting prosperity, one that will make our province competitive over the long term, lasting prosperity that all Ontarians can share in. That's what Ontario Liberals believe in. That's what we here on this side of the House are fighting for. That's what we stand for. We ask all Ontarians to share those beliefs, join that fight and stand with us.

I have a motion. I want to move the following amendment:

I move that the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on May 2, "That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government," be amended by deleting the words following the words "That this House" and adding thereto the following:

Recognizing that the budgetary policy put forward by the Minister of Finance fails to use today's wealth to secure tomorrow's prosperity, condemns the government for:

Spending \$200 million less on the operating budgets for our universities and colleges than it did five years ago when higher education is the key to better jobs and a better future for Ontarians;

We condemn the government for funding our high schools and schools less by breaking its commitment to offset revenue lost to education property tax cuts;

We condemn the government for failing to modernize front-line health care and demonstrating, as the government's own health reform panel said, that it has no vision for our health care system;

We condemn this government for spreading any new health care spending so thinly that there is no evidence any aspect of care will improve;

We condemn this government for claiming it is investing in primary care reform when its deal with the Ontario

Medical Association will put that reform off for another decade;

We condemn this government for cutting the Ministry of the Environment budget another 9%, for a total cut of 40%, when Ontario already has the second-worst environmental record in North America;

We condemn this government for failing to deliver tax fairness by giving a \$4-billion tax break to corporations, and a \$650-million break for those wealthy enough to play the stock market, but offering little or no tax breaks to struggling middle class and working-poor families;

We condemn this government for spending much more on prisons than on affordable housing when homelessness in our province is increasing;

We condemn this government for doing nothing to reduce poverty, which is increasing even as our economy booms;

We condemn this government for refusing to assist and for abdicating any responsibility it has for public transportation;

We condemn this government for failing to balance the budget until after the federal government and every other provincial government but the NDP in BC; and

We condemn this government for adding \$24 billion to Ontario's debt, creating the first 12-digit debt ever in Ontario, a further burden to future generations of Ontarians;

I say, therefore, this government has lost the confidence of this House and this province.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr McGuinty moves that the motion—

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women): Dispense.

Interjection: No.

The Deputy Speaker:—moved by the Minister of Finance on May 2, “That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government,” be amended by deleting the words following the words “That this House” and adding thereto the following:

Recognizing that the budgetary policy put forward by the Minister of Finance fails to use today's wealth to secure tomorrow's prosperity, condemns the government for:

Spending \$200 million less on operating universities and colleges than it did five years ago when higher education is the key to better jobs and a better future for Ontarians;

Funding our high schools and schools less by breaking its commitment to offset revenue lost to education property tax cuts;

Failing to modernize front-line health care and demonstrating, as the government's own health reform panel said, that it has no vision for our health care system;

Spreading any new health care spending so thinly that there is no evidence any aspect of care will improve;

Claiming it is investing in primary care reform when its deal with the Ontario Medical Association will put that reform off for another decade;

Cutting the Ministry of the Environment budget by another 9%, for a total cut of 40%, when Ontario already has the second-worst environmental record in North America;

Failing to deliver tax fairness by giving a \$4-billion tax break to corporations and a \$650-million break for those wealthy enough to play the stock market, but offering little to struggling middle-class and working-poor families;

Spending much more on prisons than on affordable housing when homelessness is increasing;

Doing nothing to reduce poverty, increasing even as the economy booms;

Condemning Ontarians to traffic gridlock by abdicating any responsibility for public transportation;

Failing to balance the budget until after the federal government and every other provincial government but the NDP in BC;

Adding \$24 billion to Ontario's debt, creating the first 12-digit debt ever in Ontario, a further burden to future generations of Ontarians;

Therefore, this government has lost the confidence of this House.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): As is the tradition, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

Hon Frank Klees (Minister without Portfolio): I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1603 to 1633.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Mr Klees has moved adjournment of the House.

All those in favour of that motion will please stand and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

All those opposed will please stand and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 64; the nays are 0.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

This House stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1634.

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