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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 18 December 2000**

**Lundi 18 décembre 2000**

Speaker  
Honourable Gary Carr

Président  
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 18 December 2000

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 18 décembre 2000

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### RAMSEY INDUSTRIAL ROAD

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** Again I rise to bring to the attention of the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and this House the need to make the Ramsey industrial road, sometimes called the Sultan road, into a provincial highway.

As members would know, this road is a critical transportation link for health care, business and tourism. For too long, this Domtar industrial road has impeded safe and expeditious travel to the east.

I have asked the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to form a partnership with the communities involved, with Domtar and with the provincial government to upgrade this road in a staged, safe and expeditious way. He has told me this is not a priority.

Today I will be presenting on petitions over 6,000 names of people who share these concerns. I want to thank Chapleau Mayor Earle J. Freeborn for his continued and persistent work on this important public issue and for making certain that the petitions were circulated. Mr Freeborn has the support of communities from Sudbury through to Thunder Bay, including Wawa, Dubreuilville, White River, Manitouwadge, Hornepayne, Schreiber, Nipigon, Marathon and a multitude of others.

Clearly, for northern people this project is a priority. Mr Hudak needs to rethink his government's priorities. The status quo is not acceptable. We need action and we need it now.

#### NATALIE DAYNEKA

**Mr Brian Coburn (Ottawa-Orléans):** With millions of people around the world infected with the HIV disease, the story of an Ontarian doing her part to help infected children in this country speaks volumes. Ottawa-Orléans resident Dr Natalie Dayneka has received a nationwide award for her work with HIV-infected children: the Commitment to Care Award by Pharmacy Practice magazine.

Dr Dayneka is a pharmacist who has worked as a clinical specialist at CHEO since 1993. Her duties include finding proper dosages while factoring into consideration a patient's age, and she works in creating more favourable ways of administering medication.

Dr Dayneka must conduct much of her own research, use medical chat rooms on the Internet and communicate with drug companies to come up with a proper dosage for kids because drug companies are focusing on the bigger market in their production: HIV drugs for adults.

There were an estimated 45,000 to 53,000 Canadians living with the HIV infection at the end of 1999, and Dr Dayneka is unique: she is one of only three pediatric pharmacists in Canada specializing in HIV treatment for children. For that reason, she has created dosing charts that have been distributed coast to coast.

I congratulate Dr Daneyka on her award and I commend her for the dedication that she has shown in treating our kids living with HIV.

#### FOOD SAFETY

**Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London):** Last month in this Legislature the Minister of Agriculture said food safety is a top priority of his government. I was wondering whether the minister or any of his staff had a chance to read the Toronto Star this weekend. It demonstrates quite clearly that it's not the case.

The minister claims he's working with health and natural resources on developing a strategy that gives Ontario consumers more trust and confidence in food safety, all the while cutting the number of food investigators from seven to four. That's supposed to lead to trust and confidence in food safety? Hardly.

Uninspected meat is a risk to public health. Officials warn of rabies, tuberculosis, salmonella and E coli. A Ministry of Health memo says uninspected carcasses have turned up on banquet halls across this province, yet this minister says, "I have to assume we're catching all the people who are not appropriately putting the meat through a licensed plant." We owe a debt of gratitude to the Toronto Star for pointing out the reality.

What does this government feel is adequate punishment for putting public health at risk? A \$200 to a \$500 fine—a pittance.

The story has been in the Toronto media for a month. This city is the largest consumer of meat in the province. Ontario farmers produce the cleanest, safest and highest-quality meat in the world, yet this minister sat idly by while the reputation of our agri-food industry has been once again sullied by a few bad apples.

He's the minister of agriculture. It is incumbent on him to ensure consumer confidence and promote Ontario's agricultural industry. He's failed miserably.

### DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak about one of our most important responsibilities not only as legislators but also as Ontarians, and that is the responsibility to provide assistance for those with developmental disabilities.

It was my privilege last Friday to be part of a presentation of a cheque of more than \$1 million to the Community Living associations of Durham region so that they can provide residential assistance and accommodation for 20 people with developmental disabilities.

This fund is part of a \$50-million new investment announced by the Ministry of Community and Social Services last spring. It will provide for adults who are living at home with aging parents, adults whose needs change as they age and young adults moving from the child welfare system.

It has often been said that society may be judged by how it treats its weakest members. I believe that we look to Durham for examples of effective, compassionate leadership from agencies like the Central Seven of Port Perry, the Oshawa/Clarington Association for Community Living, Christian Horizons and the Durham Association of Family Respite Services, along with the Ajax Pickering Whitby Association for Community Living. These agencies ensure that people with special needs are able to remain close to their families and that supportive systems are in place.

I would like to thank the members of the board and volunteers Peter Dill, Glenn Taylor, Pam Domingos, Paul Burston, Mayah Sevink, Steven Finlay and the many volunteers and families that make services work for the people in Durham who really need our help.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot):** I'm pleased the Minister of Municipal Affairs is in the House. The rationale for the Harris government's move to various amalgamations has been the creation of smaller, more efficient governments providing better quality services at lower cost.

This clearly hasn't been the case in Metro Toronto, where we've seen a quarter-million-dollar budget shortfall balloon to over \$1 billion, projected, and His Worship there talking about a projected bankruptcy with the downloading of social housing.

It didn't work with the three hospitals in Hamilton, none of which were running at a deficit and which then had a deficit balloon to \$40 million, nor with the school boards' amalgamation, which has left kids at risk in terms of transportation policy and has been pitting community against community around school closings.

Now we read from the government's appointed transition board chair and other elected officials that there may be up to a 10% tax increase, notwithstanding the area rating, and that doesn't include the \$100-million projected infrastructure shortfall. They also note that

there's been no commitment to date from this government for adequate transitional funding, currently projected at \$46 million, twice the original projection.

It's the Christmas season, and the people of my riding want some assurance that legislation will be put in place to protect them from the very tax increases we were promised wouldn't occur and that adequate transitional funding for this new city that has been created will in fact be provided.

1340

### INJURED WORKERS

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I am proud to give voice to a number of injured workers who are here from United Steelworkers of America local 7135. They work at National Steel Car. They're here in the gallery today, and they're here to protest the fact that Bill 99 is denying them the opportunities that they would have had under the previous legislation that existed in this province.

This group of workers has been wronged, in my opinion and that of the member from Hamilton East. We've both attended a public meeting of all these workers. They've been wronged by the company, they have been wronged by this government in terms of the legislation that they've rammed down the throats of injured workers and they've been wronged by the board, which to date has not guaranteed them that their rehab programs and their money is going to be continued after their EI runs out, which is where they are now.

There were about 30 people in that room, and I can tell you that these workers, who were injured through no fault of their own, are desperate in terms of what their future is. We said at the time, when you rammed Bill 99 through, that there were going to be innocent injured workers that were hurt, and their families were hurt.

We are a week away from Christmas. They have no idea how they're going to manage to put food on the table next year, and at the end of the day it all lies at the doorstep of Mike Harris and this anti-worker government.

### JOYCE FEE

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I'm very proud to have attended the Order of Ontario ceremony last week when one of my constituents, Joyce Fee, was a recipient.

Joyce Fee, the first female principal in Peterborough county, was instrumental in initiating educational reform for instruction of children with disabilities. A single mother of five, she became founder and leader of many support groups and always has been an advocate for children.

Joyce initiated several programs, including Host Family Relief, Family Support Worker, Peterborough Project for Special Needs Adults and Community Action Network and Special Olympics. As well, she has been an

active member of Soroptimist International of Peterborough for over 22 years.

In 1995, Joyce received the eastern Canada region's Woman of Distinction Award for her outstanding achievements in her personal, professional, business and volunteer activities.

My congratulations, Joyce, on your achievement.

#### TED THORNLEY

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** I stand solemnly and with great sadness as I would like to comment on the recent and untimely death of Ted Thornley, who was the president of the Police Association of Ontario.

The Police Association of Ontario, representing over 13,000 municipal police personnel, is deeply saddened by the loss of their president, who passed away early Friday morning at the very young age of 49.

Mr Thornley led a life dedicated to community policing and the understanding that in order for police to be effective, they need to be an integral part of the greater community. He was a police constable with the Waterloo Regional Police Service and became involved with their association in 1974. In 1988, he was elected as president of the Waterloo Regional Police Association and has served in that capacity since then. Ted Thornley was then elected to the board of directors of the Police Association of Ontario in 1995 and was serving as president.

Ted Thornley was greatly admired by many people, including myself. I had the privilege and honour of meeting him. Ted led a life dedicated to his family and friends, the greater community as well as his continuous dedication to his role as both a police officer and in particular president of the Police Association of Ontario. He will be greatly missed by everyone here, and I know that all of us here share that.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of Dalton and the Liberal caucus and I hope the rest of the House, to send our sincere condolences to his wife, Karen, and their three children, Vicki, Kerri and Jamie, during this time of sorrow. Our prayers and thoughts are with him and his family.

Speaker, I would also ask for unanimous consent for one moment of silence.

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Is there unanimous consent? Agreed. If all members and our friends could join in a moment of silence for our colleague.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

#### NORM JARY

**Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington):** He still begins every presentation with "Hi, everybody" in his booming, enthusiastic sportscaster voice. His remarks are still always prepared lovingly by his wife, Jean. I rise today to pay tribute to a fine gentleman and a fellow politician, loved and respected in Guelph, Mr Norm Jary. He began his career as a sports and news broadcaster for CJOY Radio, but today I would like to honour him for

his 37 years of dedication in serving the public as a member of Guelph city council, 16 of those as our mayor.

Norm had a personal interest in parks and recreation, consistently serving on that particular committee. This commitment was celebrated last June when the community park was renamed the Norm Jary Park. He has worked tirelessly to beautify our city, showing up on things like Communities in Bloom and even in his own garden, which is often included in the Guelph Historical Society of garden tours.

Whether it was supporting the development of shopping malls, Exhibition Park, the Victoria Road or Centennial arenas, or establishing the Macdonald Stewart Art Gallery or the Guelph Arts Council, Norm worked tirelessly to encourage ingenuity and competitiveness in our city. In 1993, he was honoured with the commemorative medal for the 125th anniversary of the Confederation of Canada, granted only to citizens who have contributed to the quality of life in Canada and in their communities all across this great country of Canada.

Norm's genuine love for his community and his family are legendary in our city. He was an outstanding leader and in his retirement is to be commended for his varied contributions to Guelph-Wellington.

#### VISITORS

**Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources):**

On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Today we had the opportunity to recognize the Ontario Parks bursary awards for young people who have been exemplary in their service to the public and our parks. Some 40 of these young people received a \$500 bursary, with help from our corporate sponsors, and four of those young people are in the gallery today. I'd like to introduce them: Carol Reesor, Alex Curry, Ryan Good and Valerie Cavendar.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### CITY OF KAWARTHA LAKES ACT, 2000

##### LOI DE 2000 SUR LA CITÉ DE KAWARTHA LAKES

Mr Clement moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 170, An Act respecting the new municipality of The Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes / Projet de loi 170, Loi concernant la nouvelle municipalité appelée The Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes.

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

The minister for a short statement.

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** Briefly, this legislation will help the city of Kawartha Lakes meet taxpayer needs and save taxpayers' money when it comes into existence on January 1. The legislation has been put forward at the request of the Kawartha Lakes transition board, which

includes the mayor-elect of the new city. If passed by the Legislature, the legislation would give the transition board a few new powers to enter into certain agreements on behalf of the new city. It would also give the new city additional authority to allocate certain municipal costs to taxpayers in specific areas of the city.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the transition board for their hard work and dedication to the new city.

VICTIM EMPOWERMENT ACT, 2000  
LOI DE 2000 SUR L'HABILITATION  
DES VICTIMES

Mr Sterling moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 171, An Act to give victims a greater role at parole hearings, to hold offenders accountable for their actions, to provide for inmate grooming standards, and to make other amendments to the Ministry of Correctional Services Act / Projet de loi 171, Loi visant à accroître le rôle des victimes aux audiences de libération conditionnelle et à responsabiliser les délinquants à l'égard de leurs actes, prévoyant des normes relatives à la toilette des détenus et apportant d'autres modifications à la Loi sur le ministère des Services correctionnels.

**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.

Call in the members; this will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1351 to 1356.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please stand and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

Arnott, Ted	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	Snobelen, John
Beaubien, Marcel	Jackson, Cameron	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Sterling, Norman W.
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Coburn, Brian	Kormos, Peter	Stockwell, Chris
Dunlop, Garfield	Marland, Margaret	Tilson, David
Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Elliott, Brenda	Molinari, Tina R.	Turnbull, David
Flaherty, Jim	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Galt, Doug	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Gill, Raminder	O'Toole, John	Wood, Bob
Hardeman, Ernie	Runciman, Robert W.	Young, David

**The Speaker:** All those opposed will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 39; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

The minister for a short statement.

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Minister of Correctional Services, Government House Leader):** Victims of crime and their families have told us that living in the aftermath of crime is a difficult and daunting challenge. If this bill

was passed, victims would have greater participation in parole hearings. The bill will also implement a zero-tolerance policy for acts of violence against correctional staff; it will establish standards of professional ethics for all staff involved in providing correctional services, including those employed by both public and private operators; it will provide for grooming and appearance standards for inmates serving sentences in correctional institutes relevant to security, health and safety issues; and it will implement a process to monitor, intercept or block communications between inmates and others where reasonable for the safety and security of other persons and institutions.

GREATER JUDICIAL APPOINTMENTS  
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 2000  
LOI DE 2000 SUR L'OBLIGATION  
DE RENDRE DES COMPTES  
EN MATIÈRE DE JUSTICE

Mr Wood moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 172, An Act to provide for greater accountability in judicial appointments / Projet de loi 172, Loi visant à accroître l'obligation de rendre compte en ce qui concerne les nominations à la magistrature.

**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.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1400 to 1405.*

**The Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Ayes**

Arnott, Ted	Hodgson, Chris	Snobelen, John
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	Spina, Joseph
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Sterling, Norman W.
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Stewart, R. Gary
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Stockwell, Chris
Coburn, Brian	Marland, Margaret	Tilson, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Mazzilli, Frank	Tsubouchi, David H.
Ecker, Janet	Molinari, Tina R.	Turnbull, David
Elliott, Brenda	Munro, Julia	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Flaherty, Jim	Mushinski, Marilyn	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John	Wood, Bob
Gill, Raminder	Runciman, Robert W.	Young, David
Hardeman, Ernie	Sampson, Rob	

**The Speaker:** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Nays**

Agostino, Dominic	Cordiano, Joseph	McGuinty, Dalton
Bartolucci, Rick	Crozier, Bruce	McLeod, Lyn
Boyer, Claudette	Curling, Alvin	McMeekin, Ted
Bradley, James J.	Dombrowsky, Leona	Peters, Steve
Brown, Michael A.	Duncan, Dwight	Phillips, Gerry
Caplan, David	Kennedy, Gerard	Pupatello, Sandra
Christopherson, David	Kormos, Peter	Sergio, Mario
Churley, Marilyn	Levac, David	Smitherman, George
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	

**Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 38; the nays are 26.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

The member for London West for a short statement.

**Mr Bob Wood (London West):** This bill is intended to provide greater public accountability for judicial appointments. It proposes to do that by making the appointment process for justices of the peace the same as that for judges: having the Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee publish the criteria used in assessing candidates, permitting the Legislature by resolution to set or change these criteria, having the names of all the people found qualified and suitable for appointment submitted to the Attorney General for consideration and requiring approval by the Legislature of all proposed appointments before they become effective.

For the first time in the history of this province, the Legislature would set the criteria for judicial appointments and the Attorney General would be responsible to the Legislature for following them in each and every appointment. Surely, it is time to take this process out of the backrooms and put it fully in the hands of all the elected representatives. Transparency and democracy do work.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek once again unanimous consent to allow for the singing of O Canada at the beginning of daily proceedings in this Legislature. As you know, the students of this province, by this government, sing O Canada. There is no reason we can't sing our national anthem in this Legislature.

**The Speaker:** Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

## MOTIONS

### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Minister of Correctional Services, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 12 midnight on Monday, December 18, 2000, for the purpose of considering government business.

1410

**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. Carried.

**Hon Mr Sterling:** I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(ii), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm till 12 midnight on Tuesday, December 19, 2000, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker:** 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. Carried.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### EDUCATION

**Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Education. Last Thursday I presented in this Legislature a peace plan. That plan respects your government's bottom line: your insistence that Ontario teachers provide 1,250 minutes of classroom instruction every week. At the same time, it will restore a sense of peace to our high schools and it will restore a positive learning climate, which the Education Improvement Commission has told us is sorely lacking.

You now have had three days to more fully consider my peace plan. At the same time, Madam Minister, you have also had an opportunity to consider how well the plan is being received by the broader public. Having had that opportunity to reconsider and to gauge the public reaction, will you now agree to support our peace plan to put our students first?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education):** The Education Improvement Commission very clearly said that politics in the classroom—if people were bringing politics into the classroom regardless of who they were—was wrong and would undermine student achievement. I certainly agree with that, and this government agrees with that.

This one suggestion that the honourable member keeps on about is a suggestion the OSSTF, the public high school union, brought forward some years ago. An arbitrator has subsequently ruled that it does not achieve any of the government's objectives. The honourable member keeps saying it's a win-win-win, or a compromise for all, and asks taxpayers for another \$150 million and asks students for a longer workday. Where's the compromise on the teacher union side?

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, this is going to present a real and difficult challenge for you. I am asking you to put Ontario students first. I am going to be asking you about this all week long, and I'll be asking you to do the same thing time and time again: put the politics aside and put our students first.

You've had an opportunity to gauge the public reaction to this proposal. You've seen the Toronto Sun, you've seen the Hamilton Spectator, you've seen the Toronto Star and you've seen the Ottawa Sun. These newspapers represent the full spectrum of political diversity in Ontario and they've all said the same thing: this plan is worthy of serious consideration and it's high

time that we, the legislators in this House, worked together to put our students first. That's exactly what our plan is all about, Madam Minister. Why won't you work with me to put our students first?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, we were quite prepared to work with the honourable member to put the students of Hamilton-Wentworth first, and he refused and did not support back-to-work legislation. Second, I met with all our education partners some weeks ago. They put forward a number of proposals that are worthy of study. We are looking at those. As recently as today I met with representatives of the teacher unions to talk about many proposals. We are doing the work on that to solve these things.

It's interesting that, on one hand, last week the Liberal Party was standing up saying we have a teacher shortage and was worried that there wouldn't be teachers in the classroom. Then, the same week, they put forward a proposal that would actually make the situation worse. It is not a helpful policy proposal to make an even worse challenge for school boards trying to hire qualified and good teachers at the front of the classroom.

**Mr McGuinty:** I've heard from school boards, I've heard from teachers, I've heard from parents and I've heard from students. I've heard from no one who stands against giving very serious consideration to this peace plan, save and except for you. Apparently, the only real impediment to restoring peace in our schools is you, the person in charge of our schools.

Here's a call I got from a parent last week when she heard about the peace plan. Cathy Balsys has three students attending Martingrove Collegiate, just outside Toronto. She says, "This plan would truly give our kids more quality time, while restoring dignity to our teachers and harmony in our schools. I am so pleased that we are finally putting the needs of my kids first."

Madam Minister, if you don't sense this, I at least sense a heavy responsibility to try to reintroduce some sense of stability and to eliminate the turmoil inside public education today. This is the kind of thing that can't wait until after Christmas. I put forward a positive, substantive policy proposal. It has been well received in many quarters. If you don't agree with this, Madam Minister, where is your proposal?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Let's talk about some of the proposals. OSSTF said the workload, set almost three years ago, wasn't workable. There have been strikes over it; there's been an election over it. It was set three years ago; they said it wasn't workable. So we compromised on that this spring, and we put forward 64 million taxpayers' dollars to make that happen. But they still weren't satisfied.

Then they said job loss was going to be a problem, so we put forward \$263 million of the taxpayers' money to hire more teachers to have smaller classes to try to deal with the workload. They still weren't satisfied. We gave them flexibility in how they could implement it, so that the teacher who goes out and does the extracurricular activities gets the extra time to do them. They rejected

that; they wouldn't agree to that. They're still not satisfied. Now, through the Liberal Party, the OSSTF brings forward an idea that was rejected three years ago and says it is the magical solution.

I didn't hear any union leaders standing up and saying extracurricular activities are going to be miraculously restored in our schools—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Order. The minister's time is up. New question.

**Mr McGuinty:** The second set of questions is to the same minister. The matter is so important to us that we're prepared to devote the time and energy necessary to helping the minister see the light in this matter.

Minister, there are probably 100 reasons that you are prepared to articulate here and during the rest of the week as to why we shouldn't move forward with this peace plan. But there is one overwhelming, predominant reason why you and I have to move forward with this peace plan. It's simply because our kids aren't getting the quality education to which they are entitled. That's what it's all about.

I can tell you that Ontario families have the same kind of rule right across the province. When it comes to matters that are in the interests of our children, kids come first. That's exactly what this plan is about. It's about putting our kids first.

Since I introduced this bill in this House, Madam Minister, I've heard from teachers and school boards, and do you know what they're telling me? They are sick and tired of the fighting, and they want a way out. They know, in their heart of hearts, that what they're supposed to be doing is putting the interests of our students first. That's what this peace plan is all about. Why won't you help me, Madam Minister? Let's put students first.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** With all due respect to the honourable member, peace is fine, but what parents want is better schools. That's what we need: increased student achievement.

The standards that are being put in place across this province, the proposals that we were elected to implement—stronger curriculum, standardized teaching, testing, teacher testing programs—those are the standards that we were elected to implement that will achieve higher student achievement for our students and better schools.

This proposal is asking the taxpayers for another \$150 million, asking our students to spend a longer time in their school day. So, more work for students, more paid by taxpayers, reduced workload by teachers. That is not the solution that we need for all of the problems. If this means that the teacher union that is objecting to all of this, that is putting forward this proposal, is now prepared to work with this government—

1420

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, you've taken \$1.8 billion out of public education in Ontario. I think putting \$150 million back in public education in order to give peace a chance is a damn good investment.



Some 75% of our high school students aren't getting the extracurricular activities to which they are entitled. If you don't understand just how urgent the matter is, I'm going to refer you, one more time, to the Education Improvement Commission, your own commission, which just released its final report and said the following:

"We cannot overstate our concern about the reduction in extracurricular activities. Research shows that students who take part in extracurricular activities enjoy greater overall success in school. If the current impasse continues, it's clear that more students will drop out and fewer will succeed." This, from your own commissioner.

We have a full-blown, genuine crisis in Ontario high schools. I sense a heavy responsibility and my caucus senses a heavy responsibility to try to do something positive, something proactive, and that's what we've done through this peace plan. If you don't like this plan, Madam Minister, give us your plan. Table it here right now.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, the Education Improvement Commission talked about compromise, not capitulation. Secondly, the money in the education system today is more than it was in 1995 and 1996. In 1995 and 1996, it was \$12.9 billion; today it is \$13.5 billion.

Secondly, today, as we speak, there are thousands of teachers who are—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** The member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale, come to order, please. Minister.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member can talk all he wants about trying to buy peace. It is not about buying peace; it is about putting forward quality reforms that will help us get to better schools, because that's what parents want. We can try to buy off the union, as the honourable member is recommending. I would prefer to sit down with our education partners, as we are, to find out solutions that will work. I know the honourable member thinks he can wave a magic wand and—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up.

**Mr McGuinty:** Minister, you know what is happening out there. Parents are in absolute dismay, if not disgust, at what has been happening inside our high schools. They want solutions; they don't want politics. They want all of us to work together to fix it. They are sick and tired and disgusted with the constant in-fighting and bickering.

We've done something that is, admittedly, out of character with opposition parties. We've put forward a substantive policy proposal. We think the matter is so important that we put something forward, we've tendered it to you, we've made it available to the public. It has been well received in virtually every quarter except by you and your government, Madam Minister.

If you, for some reason, feel that our plan has some serious shortcomings, then let's talk about those. If you feel that it is beyond repair, beyond redemption, then you have one option alone: to put forward, before this House rises for the Christmas break, to introduce in this House a bill that will be acceptable to our teachers, to the

government, to parents, to students and the school board; a bill, in short, that puts our students first.

If you fail to do that, Madam Minister, that tells me and it tells our parents and it tells our students, most importantly, you have no genuine commitment to peace in our schools and you have no genuine commitment to putting Ontario students first.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** The honourable member says that peace in our schools is the goal and the objective. I would like to remind the honourable member that when we did have peace in our schools, we had declining standards. When we did have so-called peace, this magical period that the opposition likes to talk about, some magical time when there was peace in our schools, we also had student achievement declining.

International tests are showing that the higher standards are starting to pay off. We actually do have—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Please, this is the last warning for the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale. One more and you'll be out for the day.

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

The international tests are showing that our higher standards are starting to pay off. That's what parents want to see: better achievement for their students.

Secondly, yes, parents are frustrated. Why are they frustrated? Because some teachers are choosing to take away extracurricular activities from their kids. That is wrong; that is not supportable. Parents have objected to that, and we are going to continue to work with the teacher unions—

**The Speaker:** The minister's time is up. New question.

## MEAT INSPECTION

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Deputy Premier. Do you think your government is doing enough to stop the operation of illegal slaughterhouses in Ontario and to stop meat that is slaughtered in filthy and unhygienic conditions from being sold in Ontario restaurants and in some food stores?

**Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance):** The Minister of Agriculture will be able to answer that question.

**Hon Ernie Hardeman (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** Thanks very much to the member opposite for the question. The illegal meat trade is a problem and we are concerned about it. Our ministry is working hard to track down any offenders and lay the appropriate charge. Making sure that food is safe is a top priority for our ministry.

Here in Ontario we have one of the best food systems in the world. Unfortunately, some have chosen to live outside the system. I want to stress to the member that we are taking all allegations of selling uninspected meat very seriously. We have a highly trained and specialized enforcement team that responds to these calls. The alleged

illegal plants monitored in the Toronto Star story today are currently under investigation.

**Mr Hampton:** We saw the Ministry of the Environment dramatically cut back on the number of inspectors who were out there inspecting water treatment facilities and ensuring that water treatment facilities were operating properly. The public probably doesn't know that the Ministry of Agriculture reduced by half the number of inspectors who should be out there making sure that illegal slaughterhouses can't operate. You say you're concerned. The fact of the matter is, the only thing you've done about this is reduce the number of inspectors who should be out there protecting the health and safety of Ontario people. That's all you've done.

The problem just in one region, in York region outside this city, is such that one official says there are more than 20 illegal slaughterhouses there. That is, as we know, more a suburban neighbourhood now than a farm area. We know that there have been a number of grocery stores that have been convicted of selling illegal meat since 1997.

What are you doing, other than cutting the number of inspectors who are supposed to be out there ensuring that illegal slaughterhouses don't operate? What are you doing other than cutting the protection of health and safety?

**Hon Mr Hardeman:** In the past year, we've moved the focus of our investigative resources on to food safety issues rather than fraud investigation and internal human resources matters. However, the number of enforcement officers dedicated to food safety and illegal issues has not decreased.

We also want to say that we have reorganized our investigative branch in order to increase efficiency and improve effectiveness. We've consolidated important resources with the Ministry of Natural Resources. Incidentally, those changes have paid off. In the eight months since the partnership was formed, 62 charges have been laid, considerably more than over the same period last year. Of that number, there have already been 18 convictions, with over 40 court cases still coming out between now and January. This is more convictions for selling uninspected meat than the previous three years combined. We are concerned about food safety and we are working to make sure that we eliminate—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** Final supplementary.

**Mr Hampton:** All I can say for this minister is that he's changed his line a little bit. When this issue was first raised in the media, his response was, "Well, there are fewer slaughterhouses in Ontario. Therefore, there's not much of a problem."

1430

The reality is that yes, there are fewer slaughterhouses that are operating legally; there are more slaughterhouses that are now operating illegally. The reason they're able to do so is because you've cut the number of inspectors who are out there dedicated to shutting down the illegal slaughterhouses and you've cut the number of inspectors

overall. That's what is happening. Public health officials acknowledge that illegal meat in the thousands of kilograms is being sold in restaurants and small grocery stores across the greater Toronto area, never mind the rest of Ontario. Everybody else out there knows about the problem. The only thing you've done about it is cut the number of meat inspectors overall and cut the number of inspectors who are supposed to be dealing with illegal abattoirs as well.

Minister, will it take another Walkerton before your government understands that your government, all governments, has a job to do in protecting the health and safety of our citizens and that the private sector isn't going to do it for you? What are you going to do to address this problem now, before somebody becomes seriously ill?

**Hon Mr Hardeman:** I want to say that not only at present but in the term of the previous government, your government, and in the term of the Liberal government the Provincial Auditor said that we must change the way we are doing our meat inspection in Ontario. We are not getting good value for the inspection process. One of the things he suggested was that we make sure we direct our resources toward enforcement of the meat inspection and enforcement of the illegal slaughter.

We have taken that initiative. We have put the enforcement of illegal slaughter with the Ministry of Natural Resources to make sure we put those resources toward that activity. It is working, and that's why we have laid such a large number of charges and that is why we have a large number of convictions, because the system as we have changed it is working better.

## EDUCATION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** My question is to the Minister of Education.

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I can't hear you.

**Mr Marchese:** I know, but you will.

Minister, in response to an earlier question on this issue of extracurricular activities, you said parents really want better schools, a stronger curriculum and testing of teachers. I think I agree with you that a lot of parents want that. But they also want extracurricular activities, and in your answer you made it appear like they weren't so important.

I have to tell you, one former Scarborough student was very active in extracurricular activities. In fact, he played golf, track and field, did gymnastics, current affairs and was involved in editing the high school yearbook. In that yearbook message this young man noted that a school is more than bricks and mortar, that you need school spirit to make education rewarding for students, and if you can't provide those activities, in his view you have failed.

Minister, what do you have to say to this student who said, "Until we find the true experience in school spirit, we will have failed"? What's your answer to that comment?

**Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Education):** First of all, I would agree with the honourable member that extracurricular activities are an incredibly important service for our students. They can open up opportunities for students; they allow them to have post-secondary opportunities they might not have had. They're an extremely important service. The majority of teachers see providing extracurricular activities as part of their job and they go out of their way to do that for their students on a regular basis. Even in Durham today we have teachers performing extracurricular activities.

Unfortunately, we also know that there are some teachers who are choosing to work to rule. We need a solution to that. We're meeting with our education partners to find a solution to that. Adding more money in from taxpayers yet again for no added benefits or asking our students to increase their workload so teachers can decrease their workload is not the solution. I appreciate the sentiment the honourable Leader of the Opposition has put forward that solution on. We are considering the recommendations of the union and all of our other education partners about how to better resolve this issue for our students.

**Mr Marchese:** I just wanted to identify that student. He is now the Solicitor General, David Tsubouchi. He was the editor of that paper and was actively involved in those school activities. I happen to agree with him, that we need them. He knew then it was very important and he knows today that it's very important. The fact that you blame teachers for—

*Interjections.*

**Mr Marchese:** I know you can't recognize him. He's a bit shady here because of the picture. But, Minister, your attack on the teachers as the ones who are to blame for not providing the extracurricular activities is wrong. Most teachers and most parents recognize that Bill 74 has caused this problem, and you are the author of that bill, not the teachers. I remind you that 75% of the schools are not providing those extracurricular activities. You can rant—

*Interjection.*

**Mr Marchese:** Seventy-five per cent, Minister. That means we've got a serious problem in our schools. What we need is for you to seriously sit down with the federations. I know you said, "We're meeting with them; we're listening to them." I don't believe you. I just don't believe you are seriously taking their suggestions or that you are meeting with Earl Manners, who has urgently said, "We've got to meet because we think we have a solution." I think they ought to be at the table when they find solutions to these questions. I need to know from you, what solutions have they put forth that you are considering that will solve this question?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I should have invited the honourable member from across the way to the meeting I had this morning with a number of the affiliates. It was a very productive meeting, a very good meeting. Many of those meetings have been very helpful. We are looking at a number of issues that they themselves agree need to be

addressed. The government agrees with them, and we are looking at those solutions for a number of problems.

But as the honourable member will know, we very carefully set a classroom standard for teachers that reflects the workload that teachers across the country—and again, this is only the secondary. The elementary teachers in this province already work more than teachers across the country and provide extracurricular activities, I should add. But we set a workload of four hours and 10 minutes of time in the classroom. It's a reasonable standard. We gave boards and unions the flexibility to implement that in a way that would support the teacher who does extracurricular, because as the honourable member knows, not all teachers did extracurricular before. They could have chosen to—

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

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker:** Order. The minister's time is up. New question.

**Mr Gerard Kennedy (Parkdale-High Park):** I want to again talk to the Minister of Education about the need to resolve the problems in the schools. I want to commend the Minister of Finance for apparently giving some advice to the Minister of Education, because we need cooler heads to prevail here.

Minister, you're saying to us today that you want to see teachers teach a certain amount. You're saying to us today that you don't want to put out the extra money if this plan fails. But in some schools right now you've got teachers teaching five hours in the classroom plus another five hours in their other duties; you've got some at your four hours and 10 minutes and some at less. That's a result of your plan initiated 105 days ago, and what it's done is, in 70 out of 72 school boards that last year had extracurricular activities, most of them haven't got them this year.

That's your creation, but here today and in the next three days there's something you can do about it. You can give back extracurricular activities to the students in Durham who were demonstrating outside these windows less than two weeks ago, so things must not all be fine in the region of Durham. Minister, I want you to speak to them directly now. Will you agree to our peace plan and will you put students first?

**Hon Mrs Ecker:** First of all, as I said, the reason we are having a better curriculum and improving that curriculum is so that students learn and know what they need. The reason we are setting higher standards, including time in the classroom, the reason we are having standardized tests, the reason we are bringing in teacher testing, the reason we are doing all of these things, the reason we are putting more money in the classroom is because we are putting the students first. The goal is improved student achievement. That is the goal of this government. That is what I am continuing to work with our education partners to achieve.

**Mr Kennedy:** Hundreds of students came down here in the last number of weeks: Bronwyn Underhill, Jennifer

Coles from Humberside Collegiate with Katrina Galas; Jeff and Scot Brazeau and Daniel Greene came all the way from the Upper Canada board; Nicholas Graves from Etobicoke Collegiate; Marshall Sterling organizing students across the province, Caitlin Martella from Oakwood school. In each of the members' ridings in this House, students have pleaded to be heard.

Minister, you are going to hear shortly from the school trustees of this province, and they are going to tell you to sit down and find a solution. They are going to tell you that the solution that will work looks a lot like what's in the peace plan.

I think the people of this province have a right to know who you listen to when it comes to education. Will you listen to the students, to the parents, to John Henry, for example, the chair of the school board in Kitchener-Waterloo, a Conservative for 35 years who sits on your Advisory Panel on Special Education? He says this plan is worth doing. He says for you to sit down, not to wait, don't delay, put the kids first.

Minister, agree to this plan or produce a better one, and please do it today.

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**Hon Mrs Ecker:** I met with the trustee associations not that long ago, and it's interesting that they didn't put forward the OSSTF union plan. They put forward a number of options and recommendations, as have our education partners. I've met with the student trustees.

There are a number of issues we need to deal with. It's not simply an issue of trying to buy peace with one particular union or trying to buy extracurricular activities. It's really interesting that, on one hand, OSSTF says, "Don't pay teachers extra to do extracurricular activities." They've ruled that out. Now they're back, through the Liberal Party, asking for another \$150 million for the teachers' union. I don't think that is an appropriate solution.

We've already put forward additional money for more teachers, we've put forward additional monies to lessen the workload and we've put forward more money to help teachers provide extra support to students who need the remediation. We've taken those steps. We're prepared to continue to take those steps to make sure we have improved student achievement. But this plan, this particular suggestion, is not a solution.

#### ANIMAL HEALTH LABORATORY

**Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph-Wellington):** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Last week, one of our colleagues across the way, the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London, asked a question about an animal health lab in my riding of Guelph-Wellington. The member alleged that funding for this lab was about to be cut and that the services were in jeopardy. As you know, this lab is a key part of animal health and food safety in Ontario and a major employer in my riding. Constituents are concerned.

Was the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London correct? Are the services and funding to the animal health

lab going to be cut, or was he engaging in irresponsible fearmongering?

**Hon Ernie Hardeman (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I thank the member for Guelph-Wellington for the question. The member for Elgin-Middlesex-London was totally off the mark in his suggestion. As I indicated to him last week, funding for the animal health lab has been \$5 million a year since 1997, and there are no plans to reduce it.

But don't take my word for it. Listen to what the general manager of the university's lab service division, Dr Pat Collins, said last week in the Guelph Mercury, when asked about Mr Peters's assertions: "That information wasn't accurate. It's just plain wrong. I think he's completely off base. What we're getting back from OMAFRA is strong support for the program."

We're proud of our involvement with the animal health laboratory, and we'll continue with our strong support into the future.

**Mrs Elliott:** People in my riding are glad to know this, Minister, and I'm glad to have this clearly on the record.

The lab and the services have undergone some changes. I know we made some changes in 1997, when the lab became part of the partnership agreement with the University of Guelph. There has been consolidation of services with Guelph and with Kemptville College. For the record, Minister, how well is this lab working and what effects have these changes had?

**Hon Mr Hardeman:** By reviewing the operations in 1997 and again this year and by consolidating services, we've been able to improve services at the lab. For example, the lab has extended its services on weekdays and is now open on Saturdays, turnaround times have been shortened, the consistency of testing has improved and the scope and quality of tests available have been enhanced.

The animal health lab works closely with our ministry as a strong line of defence against disease outbreaks and food safety issues. It provides good services for about 40,000 cases and 700,000 tests a year. Along with our 35% increase in the OMAFRA veterinary science program, Ontario is well positioned and prepared to deal with the animal health issue.

#### FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

**Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's):** My question is for the Attorney General. He was here before, and I'm sure the minister, who enjoys answering questions—

**The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr):** If we could just stop the clock for a quick moment, I'm sure we would be able to find him.

He is here. The member for St Paul's.

**Mr Bryant:** Minister, today an organization called Families Against Deadbeats spoke out against the Family Responsibility Office of your ministry. This organization assists thousands of families who are victims of deadbeat parents who won't make their support payments. FAD

said that you weren't listening to them, that you weren't even responding to their correspondence, that the collection rate of the Family Responsibility Office is abysmal and that you broke a promise made in 1995 and 1999 to crack down on deadbeat parents. So FAD and Ontario Liberals are calling upon you today to consider bringing in an investigative unit similar to the one brought in by the province of Alberta. This would get people out from behind their desks, hitting the pavement to track down and crack down on deadbeat parents.

Minister, will you agree to set up an investigative unit within your office?

**Hon Jim Flaherty (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs):** We are, of course, very concerned about the collection of monies owed to children and parents in the province of Ontario. I'm pleased the member raises the subject, which he hasn't raised and the opposition hasn't raised for weeks here. I'm pleased with the new-found interest they're showing today for the children and parents of the province of Ontario.

Let me update the opposition with respect to what the Family Responsibility Office has been doing these last several months. In fact, they are collecting record amounts of money for the children and parents of Ontario. The FRO workers are handling a large number of cases. They're working every day of the year to collect this money for the children and parents of the province, not just at Christmas but all during the year, collecting record amounts of money. I applaud those parents, the in excess of 60% of parents that are timely in terms of their support payments for their children in Ontario.

**Mr Bryant:** Minister, you say everything's all right. I say, don't take my word for it; listen to the families. Families Against Deadbeats represents hundreds of these thousands of families. Don't listen to me; listen to the Provincial Auditor, who says that 75% of the cases in your office are in arrears.

I understand that this isn't a headline-grabber, setting up an investigative agency. I understand this doesn't fit within your populist agenda. But you've got to understand that many, many children are going to get coal in their stockings from deadbeat Grinches because your ministry isn't doing anything about cracking down on deadbeat parents.

So if you won't agree to an investigative agency—and I don't understand why; it has worked in other provinces; you can't tell me that what we're doing in this province is enough—will you at least tell all those families and all the members in this House, who all get calls from the victims of deadbeat parents, why on earth you wouldn't set up such an agency for the sake of the children?

**Hon Mr Flaherty:** In fact, I'm informed that the work of the Alberta investigative unit is quite similar to the work done by the FRO enforcement staff in Ontario, so that'll leave that as it is.

Let me say this, though, about the Liberal work for the Family Responsibility Office. If you want to go back to 1995 and today, let's compare some performance.

Since 1995, we're collecting more money than previous governments. A record \$535 million was disbursed

to recipients the last fiscal year. That's about \$170 million more than the Liberal government collected in 1994 and 1995. During October alone, \$43.4 million was received and distributed to children and parents in Ontario. That's 24% more than your government collected in 1995. Sixty-one per cent of the cases are in substantial compliance for the children and parents in Ontario.

We've done a lot; there's much more to do. But thank goodness, for the parents and children in Ontario, they're not where they were under the Liberal government in 1995.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr David Young (Willowdale):** My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, over the last five years, Toronto and surrounding areas have experienced exponential economic growth. This growth has made Toronto a magnet for those coming to improve their lives and for those coming to invest in this province. This growth has also increased the use of our roads, our transit system and the human services in this city and beyond.

1450

Minister, we continue to see media stories that chronicle or suggest that Toronto will have difficulty in properly funding these services and programs, including the TTC and housing. These articles suggest that Toronto did not receive a fair shake, a fair deal under the local services realignment that took place three years ago. My question to you is just this: can you comment on how Toronto fared under the LSR three years ago?

**Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing):** I thank the honourable member for Willowdale for the question, and I'd be happy to comment on this. All the municipalities across the province have faced the same challenges of providing better, more efficient, safer services at a more accountable cost to the taxpayer—and indeed the results are in. Last year 85% of municipalities across this province were able to deliver better services, either at the same tax cost or a lower property tax cost to their taxpayers.

Indeed Mayor Lastman himself, in his inaugural address, boasted that, "As the first council of the new city of Toronto, we delivered a tax freeze for three consecutive years, we improved service, we cared for our less fortunate and we pulled six cities and seven governments into one." That's what he said.

But they've got to do more. They've got to continue to look for more efficient ways to deliver these services to the taxpayers. In addition to the \$560 million of tax room, when we took half of education off of property tax, they got a \$50-million grant from the province, they got \$200 million of interest-free loans. They have the ability to find those savings; they've got to deliver those better services for less. The tools are in place.

**Mr Young:** I've lived in this city for my entire life. I've been in the city when we've experienced boom times. I've been in the city when the streets were full,

when there was vitality, when there was confidence in our businesses. I've been in the city at other times when the streets of this city seemed as though they had cleared out because no one had reason to go downtown, because people weren't working in the same numbers as they are now.

These are great times that we live in, but what comes with that economic boom are also pressures and challenges. My question to you is just this: the TTC is a vital link in this city; it has been for many years and it undoubtedly will be in the future if this city is to continue to prosper. Millions of people use the TTC each and every day and rely upon it for social purposes and also in order to make a living.

I'm concerned that Toronto taxpayers will no longer be able to afford the sort of transit system that they deserve and that they expect. I'm aware that Toronto received \$829 million for TTC capital needs as part of the local services realignment, but given the concerns being expressed repeatedly at the city hall and in the media, my question to you is, can the city of Toronto adequately fund the TTC without resorting to tax increases?

**Hon Mr Clement:** Again, the honourable member is quite correct. There was an \$829-million payment to the TTC upon local services realignment that paid for the Sheppard subway, as well as other capital needs of the TTC. Yet we have Rick Ducharme, who's the chair of the TTC, the general manager, saying that Toronto taxpayers are going to be required to provide for more capital needs of the TTC in the near future through a tax hike.

I say to Mr Ducharme and to the city of Toronto, there's only one taxpayer. Get your financial house in order. Then and only then do you have the right or the obligation to consult with your taxpayers on whether a tax hike is necessary or desirable. Indeed, the results are that there is more work to be done.

I heard recently of \$35 million worth of parking ticket revenues that were lost in the past five years due to administrative errors. There is more work to be done. If Toronto can't keep its financial books in order, then I guess that the city of Toronto taxpayers are on the hook for a tax increase. But it shouldn't come to that.

#### CHILD POVERTY

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. The federal government has indicated that they are going to make available home heating tax rebates of from \$125 to \$250 to people who qualify for the GST tax credit.

We know that home heating costs are going up by \$500 at least this year, so that amount of money won't cover the full increase in costs. But for someone who is forced to rely on social assistance in Ontario, it may well mean the difference between having heat in their home and not having heat in a very cold winter. We know your government took away from social assistance recipients in Ontario the national child tax benefit. I'm asking you

today for a guarantee that your government will not take away the home heating rebate from citizens in Ontario forced to rely on social assistance. I'm asking you to guarantee today that people who have to rely on social assistance in Ontario will be allowed to keep that home heating rebate when it arrives. Will you guarantee that?

**Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs):** Yes. We don't claw back GST rebates. But I understand in the federal government's pre-election budget the Minister of Finance, Paul Martin, came forward with a plan to use some of the windfall tax revenues the federal government has obtained because their tax on home heating fuel and on gasoline goes up when the price goes up. So they had a windfall of tax revenue because of the increases in energy costs, and as such are going to give some of that back through the GST tax credit. We don't take back the GST tax credit—it is allowed to be kept by those on social assistance in the province of Ontario—and we have no plan for changing that.

**Mr Hampton:** I'm glad to hear you're not going to try to take back that rebate for heating fuel.

I want to go back to the national child tax benefit. We've seen two reports now in the last two weeks which indicate that poverty among children is increasing in Ontario, that despite all your talk and bluster about an economic boom, the number of children who are living in poverty in Ontario is increasing. That was confirmed last week by the National Council of Welfare and by Campaign 2000.

If you're prepared to allow people to receive the home heating tax rebate, will you allow those families and children living in poverty who have to rely upon social assistance to receive the national child tax benefit as well?

**Hon Mr Baird:** I'll first look at the National Council of Welfare's report. It showed since 1995 in Ontario poverty rates are going down. It showed that for Ontario families since 1995 poverty is going down. It showed for Ontario children since 1995 poverty is going down. These were based on 1998 figures. Since 1998 we've seen literally hundreds of thousands of net new jobs created in Ontario. Since 1998 we've seen literally hundreds of thousands of people escape the welfare system, so I'm enthusiastic and excited to see this report based on year 2000 numbers.

The member opposite will be surprised to learn there are two tax benefits. The national child tax benefit which the member refers to is not taken back from social assistance recipients. The national child benefit supplement is, because it's there to help promote attachment to the labour force. That's the way the whole program was designed. The Conservative government in Ontario and all 100 Liberal MPs in Ottawa said that was the way to go, that to promote attachment to the labour force was a good public policy initiative. That policy, combined with the Ontario child care supplement for working families, has given a real benefit to the working poor, people who

have been left behind. We do a lot for people on social assistance. We've got to do more to help those with low and modest incomes, the real heroes and champions.

### INJURED WORKERS

**Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East):** My question is to the Minister of Labour. On December 1 my colleague from Hamilton West and I met with about 30 injured workers from National Steel Car in Hamilton. That group represents approximately 150 injured workers who now work for that company.

Minister, as of today almost 100 of those workers have been laid off while injured because of the loopholes that exist in legislation, particularly Bill 99 and the changes that have occurred. Many of these are workers who have a long history there; many of these are workers who have a permanent disability as a result of simply going to work in the morning and then coming home not in the same condition, obviously because of an injury that happened to them while they were trying to earn a living and take care of their families.

People are being laid off out of seniority. The company is using loopholes that are in the legislation. They will call workers back for one shift or two shifts of modified work and then eliminate that position and lay these workers off, forcing them on to UI and in some cases on to welfare after that.

It's a very desperate situation. As I said, 100 out of the 150 workers who are injured have been laid off by the company. They feel abandoned by the company; they feel abandoned by this government; they feel abandoned by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board in this province. They have come here looking for your help, looking for the help of the government of Ontario in trying to remedy this wrong. On behalf of the workers who are represented and who are behind me, Minister, will you commit today to reviewing this case and intervening, if necessary, with both the company and the WSIB to right the wrong and give these workers the justice they deserve?

1500

**Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour):** I will certainly commit to meeting with you or them, if that's what you'd like to do, to review the situation.

**Mr Agostino:** I appreciate that because it's a non-partisan issue; it's one that's important. Clearly, it's important to the workers.

These workers have been denied opportunities. As you know, under the previous legislation they were entitled to vocational rehabilitation if they had a permanent disability. Under current legislation, they're only entitled to some form of assistance after they've been laid off for 13 weeks. In one case, a worker who's been laid off since the spring of this year has not yet received one bit of assistance from any market, labour or re-entry program.

Minister, clearly we need to relook at the changes that have occurred in compensation. We need to look at the changes that occurred under Bill 99, and we need to look

collectively at programs in this House that are going to help injured workers, are going to help these people get back into the workforce, get back into some type of modified work, but also stop the exploitation and the abuse of injured workers by companies who believe the legislation allows them to take advantage of these workers and deny them justice.

I appreciate the offer to review it. Minister, the workers are here today. Would you take some time after question period and meet with me and the workers so that you can see them and hear first-hand from them some of their experiences in dealing with the company and with the WSIB?

**Hon Mr Stockwell:** Certainly.

### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre):** My question is for the Solicitor General. Minister, road safety in Kitchener Centre is a very important issue, and I believe it is equally as important to the rest of the people in Ontario. In 1995, we launched the comprehensive road safety plan to give police the tools they needed to make the roads safer. We took a number of other initiatives since then: the Sergeant Rick McDonald Act, which increased the penalties for criminals who take reckless flight from police; the creation of five regional traffic management units; and since 1998 we have allowed municipalities to designate community safety zones in an area where safety is of particular concern, like schools. However, our road safety is still a concern in Ontario. As we enter the Christmas holidays, I wonder if you could tell us, and the people of Kitchener Centre in particular, how our government is addressing the issue of safety when it comes to driving on our roads.

**Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Solicitor General):** I'd like to thank the member from Kitchener Centre for the question. Last Thursday, I had the opportunity to visit a RIDE spot-check with Toronto Police Chief Fantino, Superintendent Gary Grant and Staff Inspector Ron Ralph. The location of the RIDE program was the location where two elderly people were killed last year by a drunk driver. This gave us an opportunity to reinforce the message of zero tolerance for drunk driving and also to recognize the commitment that Toronto Police services have toward the RIDE program.

**Mr Wettlaufer:** My supp is also for the Solicitor General. Last Friday, I lost a good friend and the people of Ontario also lost a good friend in Mr Ted Thornley, the president of the Police Association of Ontario. On a personal level, I feel a great sense of loss and sorrow in his passing. I was honoured and privileged to have known Ted as a friend and, as well, on a professional level. Ted dedicated his life to making Ontario a better place in which to live. His commitment to making our communities safer was a bright guiding light for us to follow. His dedication has been and will always be an inspiration to all of us. He joined our local police service in 1973 and, as a constable, became involved with the

Police Association of Ontario the following year. He became an association board member in 1978 and president in 1988, a post he occupied until his death. Our community will miss Ted Thornley; I personally will miss Ted.

Minister, you worked with Ted, the Waterloo Regional Police Association and the Police Association of Ontario in his efforts to make the streets of our province safer. As well, you worked with him to make the job of police officers a safer one across Ontario. You had some experiences working with him and I wonder if you could share some of those experiences with us now.

**Hon Mr Tsubouchi:** On behalf of all Ontarians, I'd like to express our condolences to the Thornley family, Ted's wife, Karen, his two daughters, Vicki and Kerri, and their son Jamie, and the entire policing community for the passing of one of the most respected police officers in the province of Ontario.

It was my pleasure to work with Ted on a number of issues. Two things I was always impressed with from Ted were his two loves: one was his family, but also his love of his job. He dedicated his job to the police officers in the street, making conditions better for them. The one thing about Ted that you appreciate—and I know the former Solicitor General, Bob Runciman, will—was that Ted always had a great love for life and a great sense of humour. No matter how tough the meetings were, he always managed to bring a smile to people's faces.

Tomorrow I'll be attending a service for a man who not only made a positive impact on policing in Ontario but set standards for others to follow. In attending, I'll bring to the family, on behalf of this Legislature and the people of Ontario, condolences and thanks for the contribution that Ted Thornley made in making Ontario a better place to live.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Lately you have been making and remaking funding announcements with respect to health care funding to hospitals to face the increasing health care needs. However, I want to bring to your attention a particular case, a constituent of mine, Mrs Maria Ramundi. Maria Ramundi, after breast cancer surgery, has developed a condition called lymphedema. Lymphedema, as I'm sure you know, if it goes untreated, can develop into a situation where the swelling can cause deformity and enlarged, disfigured limbs.

Maria Ramundi has to travel on a daily basis to Scarborough General Hospital to receive treatment for two hours each day. It's the distance, going from the west end of the city to Scarborough General. She does not drive, it is wintertime, and her husband does not drive due to a heart condition. She receives two hours of treatment with a machine called a lymph press extremity pump.

The doctor at the hospital tells me that this particular machine is used by a team which receives patients from not only Scarborough, Toronto and the GTA, but from as far as Timmins, Kingston and Cambridge as well.

I'm asking you, for the sake of the health of my constituent and many others in the same situation, what will you do to assist Mrs Ramundi by providing care in the hospital close to where she lives in the west end of the city?

**Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** In response to the question from the member, as the member knows, we have been investing in the hospitals in the province of Ontario. In fact, this year we have committed approximately \$8.3 billion, an increase of about \$850 million from last year, because our government has committed to ensure that our hospitals today are centres of excellence. We are renovating, we are expanding the hospitals within the province, in order that they can provide more and better services closer to home.

We will move forward with that plan of action. We have added and are adding more cardiac centres, more cancer centres, more dialysis centres, all with the purpose of making sure that people in this province no longer have to drive the distances they have in the past, and that they can get the services closer to home. We will continue to do that with the additional funding we're making available.

**Mr Sergio:** I would think that you would take it upon yourself and your government, then—if you continue to provide so many more millions of dollars—to provide the machine in the northwest area of the city, where people with the same condition as Mrs Ramundi can access that care without travelling miles and miles from one end of the city to the other at this particular time of the year.

I'm asking you, Madam Minister, on behalf of Mrs Ramundi and many others with the same condition, since the only option left to Mrs Ramundi is to rent a machine at a cost of \$20 a day or \$600 a month, will you absorb the cost of renting the machine, or will you make the commitment here today to Mrs Ramundi that indeed you will provide the funding to have a machine at the Humber River Regional Hospital in the west end of the city?

1510

**Hon Mrs Witmer:** As I indicated in my response to the member's first question, it has been the objective of our government to ensure that we do everything possible to bring all services closer to home. It was the commitment that we undertook in 1995. We have been increasing health spending each and every year, from \$17.6 billion to well in excess of \$22 billion this year.

As many of the members know in this House, we now have dialysis services throughout Ontario where there were none before. We will continue to make sure that as time goes on, all of the services are delivered as close as they possibly can be. We're constructing three new cardiac centres at the present time. We have five new cancer centres that are being expanded. We've introduced the Healthy Babies program. I made an announcement this morning about a new infant screening program for hearing purposes, and every newborn will be screened.



## IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE POLICY

**Mr Brian Coburn (Ottawa-Orléans):** My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Weekend reports in the media describe what some are calling a staggering increase in the number of refugee claimants coming into Canada, specifically from border crossings in southern Ontario. For instance, the border crossing in Niagara Falls and Fort Erie in 1998 had 1,536 refugee claims. This year that number could reach more than 10,000.

Our immigrants contribute greatly to our economy and our culture and help make this province truly the best place to live in North America. But how are we coping with this increased number of refugee claimants?

**Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women):** I'd like to thank the member for Ottawa-Orléans for the question. Ontario welcomes all new Ontarians to its borders, whether they come from another country or from another province. But it's important to recognize that although new Canadians coming to Ontario consist of about 55% of all new Canadians, we only receive 40% of the funds from the federal government for settlement services. Of course, this becomes a substantial problem. If you think about the number of new Ontarians we get in the province, we should be receiving about \$134 million from the federal government; as opposed to that, we receive about \$100 million. So it's really important that Ontario receive its fair share of the settlement dollars from the federal government, and we're looking forward to being able to work with the federal government to get our fair share.

With that money, we invest in newcomer settlement programs which make sure that newcomers are settled as quickly as they can be into Ontario. We also invest in cultural interpreter programs to make sure that violence against women is minimized, and we help new immigrants—

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

## PETITIONS

## RAMSEY INDUSTRIAL ROAD

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I have petitions signed by well over 6,000 people, most of them northerners, but not all. I want to thank my colleague the member for Sudbury, Rick Bartolucci, the member for Thunder Bay-Superior North, Mike Gravelle, and the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane, David Ramsey, for assisting with this petition. It says:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ramsey industrial road from Sultan to Highway 144 is used by thousands of people annually;

“Whereas the Ramsey industrial road is a treacherous gravel road;

“Whereas thousands of people must use this road to travel for business, medical and personal reasons;

“Whereas the economic development of the area is strangled by the lack of a paved highway;

“Whereas the communities of Manitouwadge, White River, Hornepayne, Dubreuilville and Wawa all support the efforts made by Chapleau Mayor Earle J. Freeborn to have this road upgraded;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and the Ontario government to immediately approve the paving and upgrading of the Ramsey industrial road to a provincial highway.”

This petition is signed by people in Sudbury, Thunder Bay and all communities in-between.

## CAMPING FEES

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Dryden district Ministry of Natural Resources is proposing to relinquish administration of traditional public boat launching and camping sites to the private sector,

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

“That the Ministry of Natural Resources be given sufficient funding to carry out its fiduciary duty to the people of this area and this province and continue to administer over these sites and cease efforts to obtain private sector proposals that may lead to” more “user fees.”

I have affixed my signature to this petition as well.

## ACCESS TO MEDICAL PROFESSION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I have a petition:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the report of the McKendry commission, released by the Ontario Ministry of Health in December 1999, finds that Ontario is facing a shortage of over 1,000 physicians; and

“Whereas at least 286 international medical graduates in Ontario have successfully completed the Medical Council of Canada evaluating exam, demonstrating competence in clinical knowledge; and

“Whereas the number of Ministry of Health funded post-graduate positions in “pool B” (that is, international medical graduates) has been reduced from 289 to 81 since 1994; and

“Whereas the Council of Ontario Faculties of Medicine has indicated that they have the capacity to absorb an increase in the number of entry-level post-graduate positions, as long as sufficient resources are provided to support the increase; and

“Whereas the Legislative Assembly of Ontario unanimously passed private member's resolution number 6 on November 25, 1999, which held that the government of Ontario should implement a plan to improve access to

professions and trades for foreign-trained professionals”—I support that, actually;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care as follows:

“(a) to restore the number of Ministry of Health funded post-graduate positions for international medical graduates to at least 1994 levels;

“(b) to increase immediately the number of entry-level post-graduate training positions to the full capacity of the Ontario faculties of medicine;

“(c) to make the increased entry-level post-graduate positions directly available to international medical graduates who have successfully completed the requisite examinations;

“(d) to develop a plan to identify alternative funding mechanisms that will allow more adequate access for international physicians to the health care system in Ontario; and

“(e) to appoint a committee, with representation from the international medical graduate community, to review and dismantle the barriers which have been established to prevent international physicians from gaining fair access to licensure and practice” in Ontario’s health care system.

I am pleased to sign this petition on their behalf, and I’ll be giving it to Geoff.

#### HEALTH CARE FUNDING

**Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines):** This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas cancer patients in Ontario requiring radiation treatment face unacceptable delays and are often forced to travel to the United States to receive medical attention;

“Whereas many prescription drugs which would help patients with a variety of medical conditions such as macular degeneration, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, diabetes and heart failure are not covered by OHIP;

“Whereas many residents of St Catharines and other communities in Ontario are unable to find a family doctor as a result of the growing family doctor shortage we have experienced during the tenure of the Harris government;

“Whereas many assistive devices that could aid patients in Ontario are not eligible for funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health;

“Whereas community care access centres have inadequate funding to carry out their responsibilities for long-term and home care;

“Whereas the Harris government has now spent over \$185 million on blatantly partisan government advertising in the form of glossy brochures and television and radio ads;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Harris government to immediately end their abuse of public office and terminate any further expenditure on political advertising and instead to invest this money in health care in the province of Ontario.”

I affix my signature, as I am in complete agreement with the sentiments expressed in this petition.

1520

#### SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

**Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West):** I am very proud today to present a series of petitions organized and forwarded to me by Megan Lynch, who is a grade 10 student at Orchard Park high school in Stoney Creek. I also want to say hi to her civics class because I understand they’re attempting to be tied into this while the petition is being presented. I’m very pleased that Megan has taken this effort, and I’m proud to introduce the petition here to the Legislature.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario is forcing teachers to volunteer in extracurricular activities, on top of teaching an extra half-course and teaching up to four classes a day; and

“Whereas teachers are already marking tests, taking exams, organizing projects and other assignments and preparing for graduation and field trips; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has left our teachers with no time for extracurricular activities at our schools; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario has not solved any problems with Bill 74 but has instead created problems in schools throughout Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, demand that the government of Ontario take immediate action to repair the damage it has done to teachers and our education system through Bill 74.”

As I am in agreement with the content of this petition, I am proud to add my name to those of the students, teachers and parents at Orchard Park high school who took the time and cared enough to generate this petition.

#### REGISTRATION OF VINTAGE CARS

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are many Ontarians who have a passion for perfection in the restoration of vintage vehicles; and

“Whereas unlike many other jurisdictions, Ontario vintage automobile enthusiasts are unable to register their vehicles using the original year of manufacture licence plates; and

“Whereas Durham MPP John R. O’Toole,” my esteemed colleague, “and former MPP John Parker have worked together to recognize the desire of vintage car collectors to register their vehicles using vintage plates; and

“Whereas the Honourable David Turnbull as Minister of Transportation has the power to change the existing regulation;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: to pass Bill 99 or to amend the Highway Traffic Act to be used on vintage automobiles.”

I pass this on to Adam, who will present it.

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** I'd like to present this 2,000-name petition. It's 2,000 of the 69,000 people who have signed this petition to the Ontario Legislature. It deals with northerners demanding the Harris government eliminate health care apartheid.

“Whereas the northern health travel grant offers a reimbursement of partial travel costs at a rate of 30.4 cents per kilometre one way for northerners forced to travel for cancer care while travel policy for southerners who travel for cancer care features full reimbursement costs for travel, meals and accommodation;

“Whereas a cancer tumour knows no health travel policy or geographic location; and

“Whereas a recently released Oracle research poll confirms that 92% of Ontarian support equals health travel funding;

“Whereas northern Ontario residents pay the same amount of taxes and are entitled to the same access to health care and all government services and inherent civil rights as residents living elsewhere in the province;

“Whereas we support the efforts of OSECC, (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Lougheed Jr, former chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Northeast Region, to correct this injustice against northerners travelling for cancer treatment;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to fund full travel expenses for northern Ontario cancer patients and eliminate the health care apartheid which exists presently in the province of Ontario.”

Our page Rosemary Wilson, from Chatham-Kent Essex, will bring it to the table. I thank her for that as well as the people who signed this petition.

#### FRAIS DE TRANSPORT AUX FINS MÉDICALES

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I have a petition signed by a number of people, this time from the town of Hearst, and it reads as follows:

« Pétition à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario. Les gens du nord exigent que le gouvernement Harris mette fin à l'apartheid en matière de soins de santé.

« Attendu que, d'une part, le programme de subventions accordées aux résidents du nord de l'Ontario pour frais de transport à des fins médicales offre un remboursement partiel au taux de 30,4 cents », pas si pire, « par kilomètre à aller seulement, à l'intention des personnes atteintes de cancer, et que, d'autre part, la politique de déplacement pour les gens du sud de l'Ontario rembourse en entier les coûts de transport, de

repas, et d'hébergement ; » pas trop pire, les deux cette fois-là,

« Attendu qu'une tumeur cancéreuse ne connaît aucune politique de transport pour les soins de santé ni de région géographique ;

« Attendu qu'un sondage de recherche Oracle publié récemment confirme que 92 % des Ontariens appuient un financement égal de transport à des fins médicales ;

« Attendu que les résidents du nord de l'Ontario paient le même montant d'impôts et ont droit au même accès aux soins de santé, ainsi qu'à tous les services du gouvernement et à tous les droits de la personne inhérents que les autres résidents de la province ;

« Attendu que nous souhaitons les efforts de l'OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), une association récemment fondée par Gerry Lougheed Jr, ancien président de Action Cancer Ontario, région du nord-est, afin de redresser cette injustice envers les personnes du nord de l'Ontario qui doivent se déplacer pour recevoir des traitements anticancéreux ;

« En conséquence, il est résolu que les soussignés exigent que le gouvernement Mike Harris propose immédiatement de financer en entier les frais de transport à l'intention des résidents du nord de l'Ontario atteints de cancer et mette fin à l'apartheid qui existe présentement dans la province de l'Ontario en matière de soins de santé. »

Je signe cette pétition avec plaisir.

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I have a petition signed by hundreds of people from the Espanola area.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Espanola area services a population of approximately 12,000 people and government statistics project a population growth of people over 75 to reach an estimated 336 by the year 2003;

“Whereas the long-term formula for the distribution of long-term-care beds would indicate a need for between 59 and 76 beds by the year 2003;

“Whereas just 30 long-term-care beds exist in the Espanola area with the result that a lengthy waiting list already exists and people are being placed in long-term-care facilities far distant from their home communities;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ontario government to immediately approve a proposal by the Espanola General Hospital, supported by the Algoma, Cochrane, Manitoulin and Sudbury District Health Units, for an additional 34 long-term-care beds in Espanola.”

I'll affix my signature, and I will give the petition to Jared Baker from Oshawa.

#### NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANT

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** I have a petition this time from the town of Smooth Rock Falls, and it reads as follows:

“Petition to the Ontario Legislature:

“Whereas the northern health travel grant offers a reimbursement of partial travel costs at a rate of 30.4 cents per kilometre one way for northerners forced to travel for cancer care while travel policy for southerners who travel for cancer care features full reimbursement costs for travel, meals and accommodation;

“Whereas a cancer tumour knows no health travel policy or geographic location;

“Whereas a recently released Oracle research poll confirms that 92% of Ontarians support equal health travel funding;

“Whereas northern Ontario residents pay the same amount of taxes and are entitled to the same access to health care and all government services and inherent civil rights as residents living elsewhere in the province; and

“Whereas we support the efforts of the newly formed OSECC (Ontarians Seeking Equal Cancer Care), founded by Gerry Loughheed Jr, former chair of Cancer Care Ontario, Northeast Region, to correct this injustice against northerners travelling for cancer treatment;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the Mike Harris government move immediately to fund full travel expenses for northern Ontario cancer patients and eliminate the health care apartheid which exists presently in the province of Ontario.”

I sign that petition.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### BALANCED BUDGETS FOR BRIGHTER FUTURES ACT, 2000 LOI DE 2000 SUR DES BUDGETS ÉQUILIBRÉS POUR UN AVENIR MEILLEUR

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 14, 2000, on the motion for second reading of Bill 152, An Act to implement the 2000 Budget to establish a made-in-Ontario tax system and to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 152, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre le budget de 2000 en vue de créer un régime fiscal propre à l'Ontario et à modifier diverses lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr Tony Martin):** The member for Eglinton-Lawrence.

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** It's my pleasure to engage in debate on Bill 152, commonly known as the budget bill. I would like to give some comments in regard to this bill and the impacts it has on people in my riding and on the people of Ontario.

The Ontario economy, as does this budget, seems to be doing the appropriate things in a macro way because the economy is buoyant. The economy is certainly riding the coattails of the American economy, and we're able to export all kinds of manufactured goods, especially auto

parts, to the United States. So we're doing quite well here in Ontario in a macro way.

But in a micro way there are some very serious impacts being felt by the people of Ontario that this government is not addressing. I thought this government had a great opportunity to address some of these issues, given the huge windfall that this government is seeing in tax revenues.

**1530**

This government is collecting unprecedented numbers of taxes and all kinds of revenues from gaming. Many people have forgotten the fact that this government's venture into gaming has been very successful financially for the government coffers, the general treasury. It's estimated they're bringing in a million dollars a day from gaming revenues. We're trying to say perhaps some of those gaming revenues, the hundreds of millions they're taking in in gasoline tax, the hundreds of millions they're taking in in provincial sales tax, the millions they're taking in in land transfer tax, could be put back into providing for our basic needs in this province.

The paradox is that, as well as the economy is doing in a macro way and with all these revenues coming into the Ontario treasury, we see that the three basics as far as Ontarians are concerned are in a state of turmoil. The three basics I'm going to talk about are health care, education and housing.

Despite all these revenues that are coming in—unprecedented, record amounts of revenues—we still have a health care system that is under a great deal of stress. I talked to a young lady the other day who was admitted to Humber River hospital at the edge of my riding; it used to be in my riding. She had to wait five hours to see a doctor—five hours to see a doctor in a Toronto hospital. That type of waiting is very dangerous but it is very commonplace, certainly, in Toronto hospitals. The reason it's commonplace is that this government two or three years ago embarked on an ill-fated course in what they called the Health Services Restructuring Commission, where they said they were going to save all kinds of money, improve the health care system, by closing down 30 hospitals in this province and closing down 10 hospitals in the city of Toronto.

Well, it hasn't worked. That ill-fated hospital restructuring venture, the reckless venture this government took upon itself, is not only costing the taxpayers of Ontario extra millions of dollars to repair the damage but it's costing Ontarians good health care. There are still extremely long waiting lists for long-term-care facilities—two years, three years—and still long waiting periods for emergency services in hospitals. We've lost six emergency centres in Toronto where people used to go for emergency services. They've been closed. Their doors have been shut. So the questions I get asked are, “If the government has so much money, how come it can't reopen the hospital emergencies?” and “Why is it closing down Women's College Hospital emergency?”

That's the dichotomy of this budget and all these revenues that are coming in: they can't take care of basic

health care needs. We still have a crisis in emergencies. We still don't have enough beds. We still have people who go in for major operations who are told to go home two or three days after an operation and, when they get home, they can't get home care. You almost have to be dying to get any home care from this government. Yet, the government has so much money.

They were supposed to put in a home care system that was to replace all the hospitals they closed. They haven't done that. I have a wonderful hospital in the west end of Toronto, Northwestern hospital, and it's still empty. You wouldn't believe it; they wouldn't believe this in Sault Ste Marie: this hospital sits on 32 acres, a big, beautiful, modern building, empty, and it's being used as a television studio. That's what the hospital is being used for. The emergency doors are closed, the parking lot is empty, all those doctors or nurses are gone who knows where and people still have to line up to get basic emergency services at surrounding Toronto hospitals.

That hospital restructuring commission, as convened by the infamous Mr Sinclair, was a total failure and has cost us dearly in the health care system, cost us dearly in terms of our taxpayers' dollars.

If you look at our school systems, in the greater Toronto area, despite all these revenues, we still don't have adequate funding for our pupils' needs or program needs. The government works on the square-footage formula—so many children for every square foot—yet you can't get enough resource teachers or guidance teachers. Special education needs are not being met because the government's faulty formula is based on square footage. It's not based on the needs of a child, it's not based on the needs of a program. This government is basically neglecting the needs of students across this province. Our schools are in turmoil, cutting back programs, cutting back after-school programs. Our high schools have no after-school programs.

We in opposition have said, "Here's a peace plan. Put a little bit of the money you have in this budget surplus into hiring a few more teachers so you can get peace in our schools." This government rejects it. This budget bill rejects any attempt to bring peace and harmony and good, solid education practices and calm into our schools. They are saying no. People can't figure out why they reject our attempts or the attempts of parents to bring peace into the schools. Instead, they want turmoil and conflict.

The money is there. Ten years ago the money wasn't there. This government is now awash in money, as I said, from gasoline tax. They collect \$3 billion a year automatically, without doing any work. It comes into the coffers of this government. If they put some of that money back into our schools, put it into our hospitals—millions in gaming revenues. Where does that money go? We have no idea. The poor gamblers who sometimes lose every cent—hopefully some of that money would get back into our schools and hospitals. I don't know where it goes.

We have up to 70,000 people waiting for affordable housing in the city of Toronto, 70,000 people on the

waiting list. That's probably more people than live in all of Sault Ste Marie; I know it's bigger than Kingston. Seventy thousand adults are waiting for housing in the city of Toronto. These are mostly seniors who are now on a pension and can't afford to pay the high rents in Toronto. They are on a waiting list. They have to wait maybe five years to get a one-bedroom or bachelor apartment in the city.

At one time, government provided housing for seniors. This government has downloaded that responsibility on to municipal taxpayers, despite the fact that Crombie and the Who Does What commission and all the experts said you should never download social housing on to municipal taxpayers. This government has not listened to the experts and is now about to download this housing responsibility. The housing stock they're downloading needs hundreds of millions of dollars in repairs. Many of these buildings, whether they be in Regent Park or Jane-Woolner, whether they be in Etobicoke or in Rexdale, need new furnaces, need new water systems; they need to be upgraded to meet the fire code. The municipalities don't have the money to upgrade these downloaded social housing units they've been given. Many of the people who live in these apartments and homes are not going to have the best of conditions because the municipalities won't be able to retrofit them because the municipalities are facing a crunch with other downloads.

So we have those three basic needs: education, from the primary grades right through high school; our hospitals, whether it be emergency services or long-term-care facilities; and housing, especially housing for those in need, our seniors. This government is not investing its huge surplus in the right places. It is basically floundering around making an announcement every day about some program, yet the basic needs are not being met.

If you ask any parent, any teacher, any student in any school in Toronto, they'll tell you there is turmoil in the schools. There is not adequate funding to provide an adequate number of teachers, guidance counsellors, program administrators, people who give support programs to children with special needs. I was talking to a parent the other day in a school in my area where the caretaker has to take care of lunchroom supervision. The caretaker volunteers to take care of the kids at lunchtime because the teacher's aide who used to take care of the lunchtime supervision program was let go. So here we are in one of the wealthiest provinces and one of the wealthiest jurisdictions in the world and we can't even afford to hire someone to supervise kids at lunchtime.

#### 1540

Children who have special education needs can't get assessments in our schools. They have to wait a year or two to get an assessment to get help. Never mind the help; they can't get the assessment done because in our schools many of our psychologists have been let go. Many of our schools in Toronto are missing librarians because of this government's faulty funding formula based on square footage and not on student needs.

We had so many opportunities. This budget was a great opportunity for this government to do something,

set something straight, and it has failed, as I said, because it has not met those three basic, essential services that the provincial government is in business for. There's a provincial government to provide good housing, good education and good health care. That's what it's here for. That is its *raison d'être*, yet it doesn't do that. It is failing miserably. If you ask any Ontarian in Timmins or the Beaches or Sault Ste Marie or North York, they'll tell you this government is failing in education, in health care and in housing—three essential services.

I'd also like to talk about some opportunities that were missed. As you know, all over this province people are going to be faced with exorbitant increases in the price of heating their homes. Natural gas prices are going up 42%. We see the price of diesel fuel for running an automobile or the price of gas at the pump also going way beyond a person's ability to pay.

As you know, the federal government has put in a rebate program to help people on fixed incomes meet the crunch that's coming this winter. I would think this government had a good opportunity to do something in terms of helping people who are on a fixed low income to meet these exorbitant increases in the price of fuel. They had that chance. They could have matched the federal contribution and really helped people in northern Ontario, helped people who have to drive long distances, helped truckers who are faced with the high cost of diesel and can't make a living. Yet there's not one word in this budget about helping seniors, people on fixed incomes, truckers who need a break on the cost of diesel fuel. There's no help for them. That's a missed opportunity, given the huge windfall this government has in tax revenues as referred to by our finance minister.

Another area where they could have helped is the whole area of property taxation. There are many seniors who have good pieces of property yet are cash-poor. They live in homes that they want to live in until their last days. The problem is that with the property taxation system of this province, these seniors on fixed incomes are taxed on virtual capital gains or unrealized capital gains. In other words, they have a home that may be assessed at \$400,000. That home will get a huge tax assessment and a subsequent huge tax bill. That senior may only make \$12,000 a year in pension. How can that senior afford to pay a 20% or 30% increase in property taxes? They can't do it. This budget could have given a break to seniors. It could have done something with the Ontario property tax credit. It could have helped people on fixed incomes, people with disabilities, to give them a real, direct rebate with all the revenues this government has coming in. It didn't do that.

This government could have given a break to people who renovate, repair or retrofit their homes. As you know, all over Ontario people are rolling up their sleeves and improving their homes. They're adding on rooms; they're fixing up garages or building garages. They are improving their property. But as you know, this government gives people who improve their property a higher tax assessment. Subsequently, they get penalized with a

higher property tax because they invested in their own homes. Bill 152 had an opportunity, maybe, to stop the taxation of people who improve their homes, stop the penalization if people improve their homes. Instead, it allows higher taxes to be thrust upon people who spent their own money adding that new kitchen, adding that new bathroom; in some cases even expanding their home. This government doesn't appreciate the hard work and investment people make in their homes. It could have given them a bit of a break on that, but it doesn't—another missed opportunity. Again, it's a budget that talks about the very healthy macroeconomy, but there are a lot of individuals in this province who are not benefiting.

There's another interesting proposal that's been made to this government, and they didn't pay heed to it. As you know, there is a home ownership program for first-time homebuyers. It's a savings plan where, if you put money aside, when you buy your first home you get a break on that as a first-time homebuyer.

Many people have said, "Why not also give that break to first-time homebuyers who buy resale homes?" Right now the provision just gives you an RSP home ownership contribution break if you buy a new home, but many people buy resale homes the first time. They are being penalized. They don't get that break, just because the home is resale. I hope that maybe in the next budget we'll get an attempt to at least treat people who buy resale homes the same way as first-time homebuyers who buy new homes. I don't know if you were aware of that, but I think that's an inequity that exists in this province. It's something the government could have addressed because, as I said, the government has the financial wherewithal to help homebuyers who are struggling to buy that first home.

I don't know what the average price of a home is in Sault Ste Marie, but in the greater Toronto area you essentially have to pay about \$250,000 for a first-time home. Even if they save \$50,000, it's a huge amount of money, a huge mortgage for a young couple or a young person to get, so they need every break they can get. Right now the government doesn't recognize the fact that there are people buying resale homes who should get a break also.

I would also like to mention that there are some very good suggestions made out there in the marketplace. For instance, a lot of plumbers, carpenters, electricians and general tile setters will tell you there's a shortage of qualified tradespeople in the greater Toronto area. A lot of tradespeople have told me and have written me and said, "Why wouldn't the government give a tax break to a professional, experienced bricklayer or a qualified, experienced plumber to have a young person come on as an apprentice so that the young person, after a year or two, can be a trained plumber or bricklayer?" Right now there's no inducement for that skilled, professional, veteran tradesperson to bring a young person on board because they say, "I just don't have any room to manoeuvre, as a small business person, with the taxes I

have to pay.” Why not give that person a tax rebate if he or she brings on a young person to be trained to be a bricklayer? There’s nothing wrong—in fact, it’s a great way to make a living, as a carpenter, bricklayer or plumber, and people are dying for them all over southern Ontario. Yet there’s no program for this government to help train and put apprentices into place to fill this growing demand. This government is not innovative enough. It’s very static in its approach. It thinks very much in a myopic tunnel vision; it has no lateral vision whatsoever. It is too focused on looking down rather than looking ahead.

Those are some of the suggestions I’ve made. I just think the people of Ontario know full well that this government is awash in billions of dollars of surplus, that it should get its act together and put money back where it’s most important: in our hospitals, in our schools and in building affordable housing, especially for our seniors. They have no excuses for not putting those programs into place, with all the money they have coming in from tax revenues.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments or questions?

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** The member spoke of energy issues as related to this particular act, and I know that if he had had the opportunity, given that the time for debate has been very much limited by this government, he would have talked a little bit about the deregulation of hydro. I find interesting what’s now happening in Alberta. Alberta, as you know, did exactly what this provincial government did when it came to deregulating and privatizing Ontario Hydro, with the promise that we were all going to get cheaper hydro rates. We were going to be rolling in the dollars we were going to save by way of our hydro bills. We were looking, and salivating as we looked, at the savings we were going to get, and now we see in Alberta that the dream is nothing but a dream. It’s a farce; it’s not working. Consumers over there and, even more important, industry, people like Algoma Steel, people like Falconbridge and others, the big users of hydro in Alberta, are saying that because of deregulation, because of what the Alberta government did, which is the same thing we did in Ontario at the hands of Mike Harris, hydro rates in Alberta are going up 200% to 400%.

**1550**

I hope we don’t see that in Ontario. But all indications are, in the early parts of our deregulated Ontario hydro market and the new privatized companies that are now split up into different parts, that we are starting to see the possibility of increased hydro rates in Ontario.

I want to stand in this House today, on December 18, 2000, to say what it means to users like Algoma Steel, Falconbridge, Abitibi and other large users in northern Ontario. If hydro rates were to go up, as we expect they will under this new deregulated market, it’ll be disastrous for them economically. It’s just another indication that the Conservatives’ ideology does not work when it comes to actually making things work. In fact, we’re going to be worse off. Just wait and see.

**Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland):** I was quite interested to listen to the member for Eglinton-Lawrence talk about the province being awash in surplus. He was also admitting to the booming economy but had some real problems admitting what created it.

I look back to the early 1990s, and I think he forgot what was happening in the States. There was a booming economy there in the early 1990s, and particularly as we moved into the mid-1990s, but nothing happened in Ontario. If he really looked, he would know what was going on. In the early 1990s, as we increased taxes under the NDP regime, revenue went down. You could see that each time taxes went up, revenue immediately went down. No question: with the cut in taxes, revenues in Ontario have indeed gone up.

I also look at why BC was doing well in the early 1990s but did disastrously in the late 1990s. It was certainly not related to the change going on in the US economy.

I think the member for Eglinton-Lawrence also forgot about the number of jobs lost in Ontario in the early 1990s. I don’t think he remembers what was going on at that time.

The numbers on welfare escalated in the early 1990s and also escalated during their term in office in the late 1980s. Welfare numbers kept going up. Food bank activity skyrocketed in the late 1980s, and that was in boom times. If you want to relate a boom time to the American economy, that indeed would be the time to relate it to.

But have a look at the number of jobs created since 1995—some 830,000 net new jobs in Ontario—and over half a million people off welfare. That didn’t happen coincidentally. That happened because of design, particularly through tax cuts in Ontario.

**Mr Mario Sergio (York West):** My compliments to my colleague the member for Eglinton-Lawrence for pointing out to the House what is really wrong with this government at this time. We have an opportunity and, as the member for Eglinton-Lawrence has said, we are missing a golden opportunity during these booming economic times.

Instead, what we have seen with this government and the way they’ve kept going since they were elected in 1995 is that they keep saying they are on the right track, but they are completely on the wrong train.

We have seen—and this is from someone who is not from either side of the House, the Provincial Auditor—the scathing reports he released just a couple of weeks ago on the record of this government. It is absolutely terrible that we have a government—with all due respect, Mr Speaker—that is even worse than in the Bob Rae days. It is absolutely abysmal.

They have increased the debt to \$24 billion in this economic situation. Where are they giving the money? To the least needy. Instead of looking after the poor people, the most needy people, they are giving that money to those who don’t need it.

Is this what the government wants to continue to do: attack the workers and the poor people in Ontario instead

of using this golden opportunity to say, “We have an opportunity to rebuild our health care system, our education” and really give a hand up to our students and seniors? They are the most needy in society. So my compliments to the member from Eglinton-Lawrence.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** I am pleased to speak in response to the member for Eglinton-Lawrence. I am sure he listened with interest to the member for Northumberland. They’re still claiming all the credit over there for the good times in Ontario; it’s unbelievable.

We know that eventually, unhappily, it appears as though we are heading for some kind of recession again. Hopefully, people talk about it, economists talk about it in terms of, “Will there be a soft landing or will there be a hard landing?” Either way, that’s part of the cycle of our system. We don’t want to see a recession and I’m sure that the government is already looking at the trends and, hopefully, is planning ahead.

Once that starts to happen, it will be very interesting to see who they’re going to put the blame on, because you can’t take the credit for all the good times and then, when things go a bit in the dumps, blame it on somebody else—which is the trend for this government. Whenever we in the opposition raise any issues that are problematic, and there are many problems, they blame it on the federal government or the opposition or somebody else out there, but they’re willing to take credit for all the good things that we have happening in our economy. So that’s going to be very interesting to watch.

The member for Eglinton-Lawrence was talking about some of the impacts of the downloading, and specifically to the city of Toronto. Just look at public transportation itself. We just heard from an independent study—something that we knew all along—that they’re going to need about \$200 million just to keep the congestion down and keep things as they are now. As far as I know, this is the only government in the western world that has pulled completely out of supplying money for public transportation. That’s included with downloading of public housing, daycare, some welfare costs and public health. This is having a huge impact on the taxpayers of Toronto.

**The Acting Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Colle:** I appreciate the comments from all members on both sides of the House. I think it adds to the debate. Members from Timmins, Northumberland, York West and Member Churley, I really appreciate those comments—it’s Toronto-Danforth. They’ve changed the name; Dennis Mills changes everything.

I just want to say that the principal thing here is that the indictment against this government can be seen in the streets of Toronto. Never in my 50 years in the city of Toronto have we ever seen people sleeping on the streets as we have in the year 2000. As poor as Toronto was in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, even during the recession of the late 1980s, we didn’t have this homelessness problem.

How can this government stand up and say things are so great in this province, that they’ve done so much, when they can’t even create basic housing for our most

vulnerable? We have never had people sleeping on grates, on sidewalks, beside buildings day after day after day—with this government in power.

That’s what I’ve been talking about. Despite the abundance of tax revenues this government gets in every day, by the barrelful, it can’t deal with the most essential needs of this province. The proof is in the streets of this city. Wherever you go—on Bloor Street, on Danforth, Etobicoke, North York—there are people sleeping in the streets, and this government pretends everything is OK and says tax cuts are great.

If tax cuts were really doing the job, they would do something about our homeless who are suffering in the streets of this city and other cities in the province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Churley:** I’d like consent to share my time with the member from Timmins-James Bay.

**The Acting Speaker:** Consent? Agreed.

**Ms Churley:** Just following up on the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, he was talking about poverty. It’s not just in the city of Toronto, but of course it’s probably more of a problem here than in any other centres in Ontario because it’s such a large urban centre with services.

It’s quite interesting that even in the bad economic times when the NDP was in government—of course, the Tory government likes to say it was all the NDP’s fault. We all know that—

**Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations):** You tried to spend your way out of the recession.

1600

**Ms Churley:** That’s what they are saying, but you know what? We weren’t spending our way out of a recession; we were trying to keep people afloat during the worst recession since the 1930s. To some extent we succeeded in that, and I’m proud of that fact. I think it’s absolutely shocking and unacceptable that in booming economic times here in Ontario we see more people sleeping on the streets than when we were in government and we were in a recession. That’s because, as you will recall, we made the decision to make sure the supports were there for the poorest and the most disadvantaged in our society.

Let me talk to you about poverty for a few minutes, Mr Speaker, because I know it’s something you are really concerned about and have been since you were elected to this House in 1990. It’s something that is troubling us all deeply these days, and it is particularly troubling, let me say again, in really good economic times in Ontario.

Contrary to what the Minister of Community and Social Services said today in response to a question about child poverty from Howard Hampton, the leader of the NDP, Ontario happened to be one of only two provinces in all of Canada where poor families fell below the poverty line since 1996. We’re talking about good economic times, and the minister and this government have no answer to the problem. The depth of poverty grew since 1996 here in Ontario. Ontario and Newfoundland were the only provinces in Canada that in good economic



times—and we all know there have been difficulties in Newfoundland because of the disappearance of the codfish. As people know, I hail from Newfoundland and have a pretty clear understanding of what happened there and the struggles they were dealing with. But here in Ontario, in such good economic times, it's an absolute disgrace and unacceptable that people would fall below the poverty line at this time in our history.

We have a government whose Premier has been playing Santa Claus lately. He said he would make sure that each child in Ontario would get a gift. Then we found out that indeed what the Premier was doing, when people called his office, was referring people to existing charities that have been in this business for years. They are already stretched to the limit. They don't have enough toys to give to every family. The Premier is ripping the gift tags off these gifts and pretending they are coming from him. That's not the answer to the problem.

The tax cuts, and research shows this, have meant nothing to the poorest people in Ontario. Look, everybody likes a tax cut; let's acknowledge that. But when you look at the reality of what has been put in this pocket and taken out of the other pocket, people—middle-class people as well—are no further ahead. Tuition costs have gone up. All kinds of things have gone up. There are more user fees under this government than in many, many years, and this is in good economic times. To achieve the cut in spending and to be able to give those tax cuts, entire areas of public service have been eliminated.

Let's look at the Ministry of the Environment for a moment. The environment is what got me into politics in the first place. I never dreamed I was going to become a politician. One thing kind of led to another. That's probably true of many of us here. We get involved in activities in our communities and our nightmare comes true: here we are. Actually, it's been quite an honour for me to represent the area which was once called Riverdale and then changed to Broadview-Greenwood and now to Toronto-Danforth. But it's the people I represent, and I'm very honoured that they continue to elect me. I do my best to represent those people, and I can tell you now that people are very aware of the impacts of the cuts to the Ministry of the Environment—about \$100 million. About 60%—we used to say 39% or 40%, but if you add up capital and operating costs, 60% has been cut from the Ministry of the Environment. We've heard from independent bodies out there, including the auditor and including the Environmental Commissioner—everybody knows that's somebody I objected to. In fact, I recall we were here a day or two extra at Christmas last year because I was in great opposition to that member being anointed by this government as Environmental Commissioner of this province. But even he has said, albeit it more mildly and more carefully than the previous Environmental Commissioner, Eva Ligeti, that there is a crisis—he didn't use the word "crisis," because he was gentler in his approach—a problem in the Ministry of the Environment and they need to do something about it.

There's no point right now in my discussing what happened in Walkerton, but more and more in the situation we are seeing daily on TV, the inquiry into Walkerton, time and time again people are talking about the fact that after the cuts and after the government completely privatized drinking water testing, it was harder and harder to keep up with the job these people were hired to do.

That is happening all over Ontario in all kinds of sectors, right across the board. There aren't enough inspectors there. Again, contrary to what the Premier and others say, about a third of the staff at the Ministry of the Environment, including inspectors, were laid off. The morale within the Ministry of the Environment is very low. They are unable to do the job they were hired to do.

Today my leader, Howard Hampton, asked the Acting Premier a question, and was answered in some kind of fashion by the Minister of Agriculture, about the cuts in inspectors for meat testing. This is in the context of what we're now reading about daily that's happened over the years in England: mad cow disease, which is killing people. I don't know if people saw in the Globe and Mail today a story about deer, I believe, on a deer farm in Alberta, where some strain of mad cow disease has been discovered and those animals are going to be put down. At this point they're not clear whether or not that disease can spread to cows and then to humans. But if you put that together with the information about the illegal meat-killing plants, then we could have a major health crisis on our hands. I'd like to know what the Minister of Health has to say about that.

When you have a government that is crowing about cutting taxes over and over again and balancing the budget, what's wrong with this picture? That's the role of the opposition. The government sees its role as being there to get up and crow about what they conceive to be their successes. But they don't address, and are not addressing, all these problems that exist right now in our society because of those cuts and because of the down-loading.

Look at the city of Toronto. I was on city council for a couple of years, and, like this place, I understand the pressures involved in coming up with a budget every year. There are all kinds of very important community services that our city councils, our municipalities, supply to the communities. There have been many cuts and more user fees across the board since this government came into power anyway, but in the city of Toronto there's a new tax bill that the government is bringing in, which is going to put any tax increase that cities have to bring forward in order to maintain their services completely on the backs of homeowners—in this party we're referring to it as a home invasion—because the government has decided, in its wisdom, to cap all businesses and multi-unit apartments.

You know, even small businesses aren't happy about that. They want their own category. The capping is fine, but they don't want to be pitted against the homeowners in their area who shop in their stores. They also want certainty; they want their own category. Once again, that didn't happen.

In the city of Toronto, for instance, they're going to have to struggle because of all of the downloading. There was the interest-free loan they got because Premier Harris and Mel Lastman decided that they had to make the megacity look like a success, but now the chickens are coming home to roost. They have to pay back that loan and deal with all the downloading of social housing and all the other things I mentioned earlier, and more. They're going to have to choose between tax increases or cutting even more really vital, important services.

**1610**

Those are the kinds of discussions that we should be having here in exchange with the government, which has the majority and the power to ensure those vital services that we as a government provide and our cities and towns provide. I'm hoping very much to hear from government members their solutions to some of those problems that are facing us and will be facing us over the next few years.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm going to take this opportunity to bring to light a little bit of what we've been seeing in northern Ontario recently in regard to the Northlander. Mr Speaker, you were here last week when the Premier and the Minister of Northern Development and Mines basically announced by way of North Bay that they were going to eliminate subsidies to the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. It was their view that trying to subsidize an organization like the ONTC was, in their words, throwing good money after bad and that it was about time government got out of the business of running freight services, rail passenger services and long-distance services in northern Ontario.

Mr Speaker, as a northerner, you understand as I do, that that is a really wrong-minded policy because, in fact, the Ontario northland commission plays a very vital role when it comes to providing transportation infrastructure to northeastern Ontario. What's interesting to note is that just last week, the Premier, in scrums, was making comments about just how bad an idea it was for the government to be subsidizing the ONTC. I was interested to note that when he went back home on the weekend, he made some comments to the media. First of all, here in Toronto—and I'll get to what he said in North Bay a little bit later—he said, "If you gave everybody who took the Northlander train an airline ticket from wherever their community was all the way into Toronto, or gave them all a limo, it would be cheaper than providing a subsidy to the Ontario northland commission to provide rail passenger services to people from the Cochrane to North Bay corridor."

I am looking forward to the \$30 million it would cost to do that which the government is going to give us, because currently, under last year's estimates, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines was transferring to the ONTC a mere \$4 million in subsidies to operate the Northlander and other services under the ONTC. If you were to give everybody who got on the Northlander an airline ticket to go from their community to Toronto, it would cost upwards of \$30 million. So you

should be happy, Mr Speaker. The Premier was announcing by way of his flippant comments to the media that we were going to get a \$26-million increase in subsidies to the Northlander.

I thought, "What a great idea." Imagine what we can do with that \$30 million. You and I can get together, as the member from Sault Ste Marie and the member from Timmins-James Bay, and we can talk about making those vital links of transportation between the ACR and the Northlander; we can provide good transportation services to people throughout that area; we can provide good rates when it comes to industries along the line, when it comes to freight services; we can provide better services when it comes to basic infrastructure when it comes to rail and telecommunications—if the government gives us that \$30 million.

I hope the Premier gives us that money, but the reality is that the Premier had a mike stuck in front of his face and like most times, he didn't know what to say—he was trying to defend his actions—so he tried to say flippantly, "Oh, if all 31,500 passengers from last year were to get an airline ticket, it would work out to being a better deal."

The other problem is that in most of those communities, there are no more airlines. Why? Because the same Premier and the same government sold off norOntair. You can't take a plane from Cochrane, you can't take a plane from Kirkland Lake and you can't take a plane from Englehart, because the Mike Harris government sold off norOntair. Now if they want to be able to get out of their communities, it's by car, by bus or by train. If they want to take a plane, they've got to drive up to Timmins, and do you know how much we pay for an Air Ontario flight on a week flight from Timmins to Toronto return? We pay \$873 for a return ticket, if you don't go over the weekend. As I understand it, most people who take the Northlander do so in order to go to Toronto during the week and come back during that week. It's not an over-weekend thing. It's normally down for medical appointments and back, for business or whatever it might be. Most people who are taking the train couldn't afford to pay \$873 to get an airline ticket, without talking about their cab fares in and out of Pearson Airport, and the cab fare it's going to cost them to go from Kirkland Lake all the way to Timmins to get their airplane ride down to Toronto.

So I say, Mr Speaker, I look forward, as you do, to the \$26-million increase this would mean to the commission if the Premier were to make good on the comments he made here.

But what's even more interesting, as he was speaking against the idea of subsidizing the ONTC and saying it was a bad idea for the government to be involved in this business, he went back home on the weekend, on Saturday and he was in North Bay. The media and the public went after him and said, "How wrong-minded can you be? In your very own community 1,000 jobs could be lost if you move through with this," and he says, "I didn't really mean it. No, no. Freight services are going

to stay. Don't worry about it. Oh no, everything's fine. We're not closing down the Northlander. If we have to give a subsidy to the private sector, by Lord, we're going to give them a subsidy."

I say I am tired of policy being invented in press conferences by this Premier. We in northern Ontario need to have a government that is serious about building the partnerships that we need to build the infrastructure necessary to allow our economy to work. We can't have this flippant policy-making every time Mike Harris walks out in front of the camera and changes his mind. He goes last week from saying we're not going to subsidize it, we're getting rid of it, to later on saying we can afford to give everybody a limo ride to Toronto or put them on an Air Ontario flight, which would be \$30 million. I'll take the \$26 million, gladly. Then he goes home and he does a press conference and says, "I want to be a good guy in North Bay, so I didn't really mean all those mean, nasty things I said in Toronto about the Northlander and about the ONTC."

As I said, we need to have a government that understands its responsibility. Its responsibility, simply put, is to provide basic infrastructure to northern Ontarians and to all Ontarians to make sure that both industry and people can operate within the province.

Can you imagine if the Premier of Ontario were to get up and say, "We're not going to invest in infrastructure in southern Ontario, because we think subsidizing public transportation in Ontario is a bad thing," and if the government was to say, "We're going to stop funding 400 series highways in this province. What a waste of money. Get rid of it"? Can you imagine what would happen to the economy of Ontario, to the Ford plant, the GM plant, the Chrysler plant and every other plant along Highway 400?

If the government of Ontario understands its responsibility in spending billions of taxpayers' dollars to fund 400 series highways across this province so companies like GM can ship their goods up and down the road in order to be able to operate, I would certainly hope this government understands we in northern Ontario need similar types of investment. Being that the distances are longer and the area is greater and the population is smaller, yes, that's going to cost some money. That's why we put the Northlander in place and that's why we created the ONTC in the first place.

If the government is now saying they're going to give us \$26 million more for the ONTC, I want to be the first to stand up and applaud. That would be a great thing. I don't think that's what it is. I think it was another flippant comment by this Premier. Or, I say to the government, stand out of the way, get out of Queen's Park and move yourself off the government benches because, quite frankly, you are bad for northern Ontario, you are bad for business in northern Ontario and, more importantly, you are bad for the people in northern Ontario, because in the end you're going to cripple our industry. Industries such as Falconbridge, Abitibi-Price, Spruce Falls, Tembec need transportation infrastructure to be

able to operate. If you don't provide it, it means the death of those companies, and we can't stand having that happen in our part of the province.

**The Acting Speaker:** Comments or questions?

**Mr David Young (Willowdale):** It was interesting to hear the member opposite and his colleague go on for some time trying to discuss some issues that were in front of this Legislature, but in reality, there was very little discussion about the content of this bill. What he did have to say would have been, frankly, more credible if it had not been for the track record that he and the other members of the New Democratic Party have to live with, a track record that includes the following facts.

**1620**

When the NDP assumed office in 1990, the debt was \$42 billion in this province. By the time they made their exit in 1995, it was \$101 billion. In five short years, the NDP had moved us to a point where the people of Ontario found that the debt was more than doubled. In fact, in five short years they ran up a debt in this province that was greater than that generated since Confederation.

When we talk about fiscal management, when we talk about what can be done and what cannot be done, I encourage those listening and watching to also consider economic reality, one being reasonable and living within one's means. What this government has done over the last five and a half years is just that: it has lived within the means. Now, with all the tax cuts that we have brought forward, we have more money. We have \$14 billion more coming into this province, so we can spend more, as we are doing on priority areas such as health care and education. It's because we grew the economy, it's because we have grown the amount that has been taken in through tax revenues as a result of the tax cuts that we are in a position to spend on those priority items. You can't simply spend and spend when you don't have the money. That's what they did.

**Mr Colle:** I've heard the comments from my colleagues from the Danforth and Timmins. I think we have a lot in common here, those of us from Toronto, with what's happening to the Northlander. The same thing has happened here in the greater Toronto area. We've got a government that's walked away from funding public transportation. GO Transit is basically now relying on property taxes. It's ludicrous. The Toronto Transit Commission used to get 75% funding for capital from this province. They get zero. They are killing public transportation in the north and in the south at a time when their coffers are full with billions of dollars in tax revenues—and they talk about priorities?

As I said before, everyone agrees our hospitals are in chaos. Our health system is under so much stress. Our schools are in turmoil. We have no housing and no public transportation. With all these billions coming into the coffers every day from the land transfer tax, provincial sales tax, from all their casinos in every community, they can't fund the basic necessities: our hospitals, our schools, our housing and our public transportation. Whether it's northern Ontario, that's seeing their train

system basically eradicated, or whether it's downtown Toronto, where this government is going to kill public transportation that took 100 years to build, they are doing what no other state or provincial jurisdiction does anywhere in the world. Nowhere in the world do property taxpayers pay for a system like GO or a system like the TTC—nowhere. Whether it be in the Third World, whether it be in Europe or North America, the province or state always helps pay for public transportation. Here in Ontario, it's unique. It's shameful that they don't support public transportation, which means better roads, less gridlock, a better economy and a better environment.

**Mr Galt:** It was interesting to listen to the two speakers in the NDP, the third party here, talk about doom and gloom. I can tell you, when we heard doom and gloom, it was back in the early 1990s when the out-migration from this province was unprecedented in the history of the province. So many people were leaving the province because of the red tape, the regulations and the kinds of taxes that were being brought into this province. That's part and parcel why jobs were disappearing.

We talk about job creation. When you go into negative job creation, when you look at the kinds of tax increases that you people brought to Ontario, with every tax increase you could see following immediately afterwards a drop in revenue, billions and billions of dollars dropped in revenue.

Yes, you tried to spend your way out, which isn't too bad of an economic policy in real severe recessions, but the government ahead of you had to put money away. We had, of course, the spendthrift Liberals, who couldn't outspend anybody faster in the good times of the late 1980s. They just doubled their rate of spending. But you people in the third party, when you were in government, tried to outdo them by debt and deficit, and you more than doubled the debt of this province. It has been mentioned earlier what happened in those five years: you created more debt in those five years than had been created in the province of Ontario since the beginning of time. It's quite a record, one that I wouldn't think you'd be very proud of, but that's what really happened.

Look what happened immediately following 1995, the election: job creation started, and since then some 830,000 net new jobs and over a half-million people off welfare. That wasn't just coincidental. The American economy didn't instantly change on June 8, 1995.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further comments or questions? The member for York West.

**Mr Sergio:** Sean, would you like to have two minutes? Yes. If you don't mind, Mr Speaker?

**The Acting Speaker:** The member for Renfrew.

**Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** I wanted to make a point about the Ontario Northland. I was interested in what our friend from Timmins said about what may have been said in North Bay on the weekend.

I was struck here last week when I heard the restructuring that was being ably supervised, we were told, by the member from someplace in the Niagara Peninsula,

who is the Minister of Northern Development—a good young man who I'm sure means well. But the ONR has been, for almost a century, not just a major instrument of economic development in northeastern Ontario but, if you've ever been around North Bay, let me tell you, it's not only a big employer in North Bay but for decades—dare I say it?—the ONR was the Tory party at work. I'm not surprised to find out that the member from Nipissing has gone home to find out that not a few of his very good friends and constituents and supporters are perhaps a little less impressed by what was announced someplace in the Niagara Peninsula about northeastern Ontario's future transportation system.

I have to say that we are looking at a situation where transportation needs are, as the member from Timmins-Chapleau indicated, qualitatively different in much of northern Ontario. That railroad was begun by a provincial government that felt the market, in and of itself, was not going to provide the kind of infrastructure that was needed to assist with the economic development of communities from North Bay to the James Bay shore.

I do hope that Mr Harris has gone home and listened to what he has been told by those hundreds of people who live in and around North Bay, who will tell him that the Ontario Northland Railway is a very important part of the employment not just of North Bay but of the economic prospects of that whole corridor in northeastern Ontario. I thank my friend from Timmins for making that point.

**The Acting Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Bisson:** That's exactly the point. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem as if this government understands what its role is when it comes to providing for basic infrastructure and programs for the benefit of both business and individuals, not only in northern Ontario, I would argue, but across the province.

The other thing that I find quite interesting—and my colleague, Marilyn Churley, mentioned this earlier in her comments and it was responded to somewhat by government benches—is that the Tories are pretty quick to get to their feet and say that everything was doom and gloom before 1995; it was a big black hole; nothing existed that was good. It was the dark days, and everything is just perfect and rosy, cheery and beautiful after the election of 1995. They tend to try to take all the credit for those things, but in fact we're starting to find, as we've been saying all along, that economic cycles, by their very nature, are cyclical. What we had in the 1990s, through 1989-90, was a North American recession, as well as a European recession, that resulted not only in the Ontario economy but the Canadian economy as well as the American economy going downward. As a result, yes, all governments had increased amounts of debt because they were dealing with what was happening when it came to lesser activity within the economy that they control.

What's interesting now is going to be to watch what this government says as we start to see what possibly could be the beginning of a recession again in North

America. We're now seeing, as Mr Clinton leaves the White House and George Bush Jr walks into the White House, that there seems to be a lessening of activity within the economy, to the point where we're now starting to see the major auto makers reduce the production of cars. I forget what the number is, but I think it went from 18 million to 16 million cars being produced this year, and that is seen to be going down. So is Mr Harris saying that's all a result of his policies? If so, I'd be interested to know.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

1630

**Mrs Tina R. Molinari (Thornhill):** It's a pleasure to enter the debate on second reading of Bill 152, An Act to implement the 2000 Budget to establish a made-in-Ontario tax system and to amend various Acts. I'm going to be sharing my time with some of my colleagues this evening.

There are several things in this bill that I could comment on. It being 149 pages long, there are a lot of good things there. But I'm going to focus my comments on just a few so that I allow enough time for my caucus colleagues to also be able to enter the debate.

This bill provides the legislative framework for a made-for-Ontario personal income tax system, a system that will be independent of the federal government. This bill will ensure that the province has the ability to develop taxation policies that meet the needs of our taxpayers.

This is a government that keeps its promises. To demonstrate at this juncture how we keep our promises, I want to quote from our Blueprint, in which under the heading "Our Own Tax System" we said: "When the federal government imposes tax increases, provincial taxes are automatically hiked. If we had an independent tax system, we could free ourselves of those tax hikes and have more flexibility in designing tax breaks to create jobs"—our commitment. "We are going to establish a made-for-Ontario tax system, completely independent of the federal government's." We are fulfilling our commitment to introduce a provincial income tax system based on income so that people can keep more of their hard-earned money.

In addition, I'd like to quote from the Minister of Finance's comment in the statement to the Legislature, Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review 2000. The minister said, "We will use our ... made-for-Ontario policy flexibility to enhance Ontario's non-refundable" tax "credits for students, people with disabilities and their caregivers. The \$60-million increase in tax benefits will assist both part-time and full-time students with the costs of their post-secondary education and ... help people with disabilities live independently and with dignity."

I'm pleased to be here this evening and to be able to speak on this. I also want to talk about some of the issues that are important, and they're right in the bill. This bill will be providing investors in research-intensive, labour-sponsored investment funds with an enhanced tax credit. Currently, the Community Small Business Investment

Funds Act allows a corporation that is registered to sell shares that are eligible for a 15% tax credit for residents of Ontario. Proposed amendments to the act would increase the tax credit to 20% for the shares. This encourages investors to invest in these types of research capabilities. It will mean more people will be investing. There will be more tax credits given to them. This encourages investment and the amounts that people invest. Because more people are investing, it will mean there's a positive impact on capital funds available throughout all of the various companies. Research project funding will be expanded and people will not be driven away, because we are offering opportunities here in Ontario.

I want to talk a little bit about some of my riding of Thornhill. Part of Thornhill is located in Markham. The town of Markham has status as Canada's high-tech capital. Over 800 high-tech families are located in Markham—population 190,000. Markham, in the information technology sector alone, has over 3,100 firms employing over 155,000 persons. This will in fact benefit a number of businesses in Markham.

Markham is the home of Canada's fastest-growing companies. I'd like to name a few: Imaging Processing Systems, machine vision systems; Trimax Inc-retail transaction software; Queue Systems Inc, technology consulting; Genesis Microchip Inc, image-processing microchips; Media Duplication Corp, CD manufacturer.

Media Duplication Corp will also benefit from other portions of this bill. The Ontario interactive digital media tax credit is available for a maximum of \$100,000 of eligible marketing and distribution expenditures. I'm proud to say that the mayor of Markham, Don Cousens, who used to be a member of this Legislature, is a very strong proponent of promoting the town of Markham and all of the technology there.

I want to also talk about the fact that this will increase job growth, as our government has always said that all of the policies we have made with respect to taxation, with respect to a number of other initiatives, have increased the economy. I want to talk about the jobs, quoting again from the statement to the Legislature by Ernie Eves: "So far this year, Ontario has created 184,000 new jobs compared to the same period in 1999. Since September of 1995, Ontario has created 830,000 new jobs, more than half of the jobs created in Canada over this period." We have already exceeded our commitment in our Blueprint of 825,000 net new jobs.

I want to talk about the strong consumer spending growth in the year 2000. Over the first nine months of 2000, Ontario retail sales were up 7.9% from a year ago. The housing market remains strong. Over the first 10 months of 2000, housing starts in Ontario rose 8.7% from a year ago. Over the first 10 months of 2000, Toronto new home sales increased 16.5% from a year ago.

This booming economy has had a wonderful effect on York region. Thornhill is in York region; part of it is in Markham and a portion of it is in Vaughan. I want to quote from a newspaper article in one of the local papers, The Liberal: "York region boasts the biggest residential

construction boom in Canada and the lowest unemployment level in the greater Toronto area.” This is according to the region’s annual economic and development review. Also in York region, “employment has increased to approximately 350,000 jobs.... Positive performance of residential, industrial (and) commercial activity indicates a continuing strong economy in York region.” This report also talks about York region being “the fifth most populous region in the country, behind greater Vancouver, greater Montreal, Peel region and Ottawa-Carleton.

“Vaughan’s population”—part of Thornhill is in Vaughan—“grew the most in York last year, increasing by 9.4% or 14,740 new residents.... Markham’s population,” which also encompasses Thornhill, “jumped 5.9% or 11,420 residents.”

For all of these reasons, I’m proud to be here and to enter this debate, because York region—Thornhill, Markham and Vaughan—has benefited from the wonderful economy that all the decisions of this government have made. This bill is just one other opportunity for us to be able to put forth our plan, put forth our vision and increase all the wonderful things this government is doing.

I want to talk a little bit about Markham’s high-tech capital. Three of the top five electronic equipment firms on the Fortune 500 list are located in Markham; 20 of the top Fortune 250 companies are located in Markham. Three of the top five infotech companies in Canada have major operations in Markham. I’m proud to say that the town of Markham, the city of Vaughan and Thornhill will benefit from Bill 152.

There are a number of other areas in this bill that I could comment on, and some of it has to do with the education portion, but looking at the time and sharing my time with one of the other members, I will conclude my remarks by saying it has been a pleasure to be able to enter this debate. I’m proud to be here and to represent my community of Thornhill.

1640

**Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough):** I’m also pleased to enter this debate on Bill 152, the budget bill. When I use the word “budget,” I really start to tingle all over, the reason being that being in business for as long as I have, if you don’t have a budget, if you don’t stick to a budget and if you don’t do a workable budget, unfortunately things just do not happen.

A good example of it is two years ago, when our government balanced the budget in this province. When you look at the services that we can now provide and increase, it suggests to us that if you balance budgets, if you have a good, workable budget—I want to emphasize that word, “workable”—for example, in your home, you can get those extra services; you can get that new car or you can get that new fridge or stove. What happens in the province if you have a good, workable budget and you have the revenues coming in, caused by increases in job activity, is that you can also add to those services. Much like in your home with the washing machine, we in turn in the province can then increase spending in priority areas.

Certainly we know two of the priority areas. One is health care, the only thing that is common to every single person who lives in this great province. Another one is education. Having a good budget allows us to concentrate more on the funding within the classroom.

It was interesting: on Saturday I had the opportunity to go to the Miracle broadcast that is done by one of our local radio stations to collect funds and toys for the underprivileged or vulnerable children in our community. I got there about 10 o’clock in the morning and I looked in the little plastic box where the funds could go if you wished to donate. It was about half full. The other box, where people were putting the toys, was about 15 feet by 15 feet by 20 feet high. It was, at that particular time on Saturday morning, about three quarters full. I had the opportunity, of course, of being interviewed on both of the radio stations, and I said, “All you have to do is look at the type and the quality of toys that are coming in to know that we have one of the greatest economies going in Ontario that there has ever been.”

It isn’t the government that has created those jobs; it’s the people, the business community, whether it be the small business man, the big business man, whatever. They are the ones who have created the jobs. What we’ve done is given them the tools to create those jobs. I want to compliment everybody who has been involved in any way in creating those 800,000-plus jobs, those 500,000-plus people who have gone off welfare. I think the programs we have introduced over the last six years are what has changed this province and turned it around.

It’s interesting. They say, “These tax cuts haven’t worked.” Let me tell you, they have worked. You know they’ve worked because other provinces are doing the same thing, and finally the federal government is seeing the light, saying that you’ve got to put money back into people’s pockets so they can spend it. It’s got such a tremendous ripple effect, whether it be across this province or across the entire country of Canada, to increase our economy and make us one of the big players in the global marketplace. It’s interesting to hear some of our opposition talk about cuts, that we’ve done all the cutting, and yet if you look at their track record, they increased people, they increased bureaucracy, and yet they just didn’t get the job done.

We keep hearing about a water situation. There have been water problems in areas of this province, in some of the municipalities, for many, many years. They had all the inspectors and they had all the bureaucracy, but it didn’t seem to make a great deal of difference.

Landfill is an interesting one. I remember when the previous government was in power. They changed the criteria for landfill selection four times, I believe it was, in the three years that I was warden of the county I represent. So I suggest to you that if you’re going to do cuts—and I’ve certainly got no problems with that, because the business community has had to do that for years when they set their budgets: good, workable budgets. But cuts and efficiency, I want to emphasize, go hand in hand. With efficiency, you get an increase in the economy the way that we have.

Look at what's happened in Peterborough. I made the comment that more tax revenue because of more jobs and more people working just made an absolutely tremendous difference in the amount of dollars that have been either dedicated or put into my community. We have gotten, over this past summer, to the extent of \$300 million that came into the riding of Peterborough: approximately \$180 million for a new hospital; a new cath lab; the most up-to-date swing lab in North America. We have an MRI. Some \$32 million was given to Trent University and SuperBuild; about \$28 million has been given to Sir Sandford Fleming College on their SuperBuild fund. This is happening because of the economy and what this government and the business community, and indeed the workers, all working together, have done not only for my riding but indeed for this province.

I'm very, very proud of the fact that I have been the member for Peterborough and in some small way have been able to make a case for the government. I believe in making a case. I believe in doing a business plan that says, "If you do it this way, the end result will be good. It will be efficient, it will be effective, and it will increase the economy of the province." I'm pleased that I was part of this government to be able to convince the various ministries of the need, and the need can only be affirmed by the business plan that you have to present to them.

Certainly, if you also look at the expansion in our community, I believe assessment this past year is up some \$47 million. That is created because we have an atmosphere in this province that says Ontario is open for business. When you get these companies expanding in the way that they are, whether it be the Fisher-Gages of the world, the Quaker Oats, the Chapters, the Home Depots, all of them are involved and want to be part of this great province, and they want to help us create an atmosphere where we can deliver the services all the people need, and that's exactly what is happening. I am extremely proud, first of all, to represent Peterborough, and also to be part of this government.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown):** Comments and questions?

1650

**Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury):** In response to the members from the government side who spoke, first of all, when you talk about northern Ontario you're not talking about balanced budgets or a brighter future.

There is no balanced budget in health care in northern Ontario. If you look at Sudbury, for example, our community has to raise \$27 million for the restructuring of the health care system that this government imposed on us. We never, ever used to run deficits in our three hospitals. Well, we do now, and the deficits are literally killing the services the hard-working professionals we have in our health care system are trying to provide.

They have repeatedly asked this government to step in, to come and do an operational review. They're saying, "Look at the books, look at the way we're doing business. Tell us where we're going wrong, and we'll correct the problems, if there are problems." In return, all

they're asking this government is, "If there are no problems and if we are doing everything in a very efficient manner, give us more money because we don't have enough money in our system." Clearly that is the problem we have with health care.

Municipal restructuring: the city of Sudbury was very proud that they hadn't raised taxes for nine years and that they had balanced books for over 12 years. No longer. Thanks to the Harris government we now have a restructuring cost of \$24 million. Initially the government expert said it was going to be \$12 million, but the government expert was way off. It's now \$24 million to restructure an already very efficient regional municipality of Sudbury into the city of greater Sudbury.

If you look at the brighter future when it comes to jobs, this government is responsible for 2,644 jobs leaving my area. I don't know how anyone can consider it a brighter future when this government has taken that many jobs out of our area.

**Mr Bisson:** I am worried about the member from Peterborough. He stands in the House and says he tingles all over every time he has to speak about the budget. I'm worried there might be something medically wrong with him.

I observed for a good seven or eight minutes that he was still breathing and wasn't falling over. So I thought, "Well, maybe I don't understand the meaning of the word 'tingle'." I looked it up in the dictionary, and it says, "tingle:"—with a "g"—"to have a sensation of slight stings or prickly pains from a sharp blow or from a cold object." We do know this government has given many sharp blows to people and many people have been left in the cold, so maybe he's starting to feel that tingling sensation you get from a government when they do the things they do.

Or could it be that it's the word "tinkle:"—with a "k"—"to give forth or make a succession of short, light ringing sounds to cause a tinkling or jingling," which sort of makes me think about advertising. This government stands up with its jingles and says, "Look at what we're doing for Ontario," when we know it doesn't really mean a tinkler's damn. That's an X-word in the dictionary when it comes to what really happened in the Ontario economy.

So I worry about the member from Peterborough. If you're not feeling well, I suggest that maybe you go off to one of these hospitals and stand in line and wait for those services like everybody else does. I'm starting to worry that if you tingle every time you have to speak about this budget, there may really be something wrong with you, or you're involved in some sort of process, as they say in the dictionary, where you are tinkling, trying to put a better face on this budget than it really has.

**Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale):** It is a pleasure to join in the debate on the Bill 152, the budget bill.

The reason I mention that again—I've said it before—is that a lot of times people drift away into the tingling all over sensation, but I want to bring it back to the budget

bill. I am very happy that in five short years our government has been able to balance the budget twice in a row, and that has not been done in the last 40 years. So I'm very happy to be part of the government.

I will differ slightly with my own caucus member from Thornhill when she says Markham is the high-tech capital of the world.

**Mrs Molinari:** It is.

**Mr Gill:** Actually in Brampton-Bramalea, which is my riding, Nortel, as you know, is the best company in the world in high-tech communications, the Internet and everything else, and they are thriving.

Because of all these various initiatives the government has undertaken, we have been able to create 839,000 net new jobs. The member from Sudbury talked about what have we done for the north and what are we planning to do for the north? In the medical field I understand we are going to be giving a tuition fee incentive, so that we can train more doctors. Hopefully that will alleviate some of the shortcomings we have in terms of manpower to send some doctors that way.

We have created more jobs. I talked about the high-tech capital, medical doctors and, you know, twice in a row—when we came in, we had a \$12-billion deficit and we've overcome that with our good guidance.

**Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex):** I'm pleased to rise for a couple of minutes to speak to the comments of the member from Peterborough, as well as this balanced-budget legislation in general. We know today that all governments are moving toward balanced budgets, as well they should. The time is long past when we should spend more money than we take in. But I'm a little concerned that the tingling sensation we talk about may be a little premature.

In a day or two, we're going to adjourn for what may be, some speculate, at least three months and probably three and a half months, and we won't be back here until the middle of April. I'm trying to be positive, but what concerns me is something that's affecting us in my riding, in the county of Essex, and that is concerns about the auto industry. The auto industry is now facing some problems. We see that every day in the paper. Energy costs are going out of this world, both natural gas and hydro. That's going to affect the auto industry to a great extent. It's going to have a great effect on the greenhouse industry in my area and on agriculture all the way around, because energy is used to plow the land. Energy is a concern all the way through agriculture.

I think we should be looking at these things, rather than looking back at the budget we feel so good about right now. We have to look forward to the spring, and we should be turning our minds to at least doing something to mitigate the problems we're going to face then.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Stewart:** I just had a glass of water, so I can bring the level of tinkling—or tingling—down.

**Interjection:** Tinkling?

**Mr Stewart:** Now you've got me confused.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Stewart:** That may happen after. Sorry.

It is my pleasure to rise and be very excited. When I talk about tingling, I'm talking about excitement, I'm talking about enthusiasm, I'm talking about the economy, I'm talking about doing things right. By doing things right, we have created those jobs, we have taken people off welfare and life in this province is improving drastically from what it was.

It was interesting that the member from—and I'll get it right today—Sudbury made the comment that they have to go out and raise some dollars for the hospital. That has always happened. The only difference now is that we've gone to a 70-30 split—30 for the municipality—in comparison to previous governments, which were on a 50-50 basis.

**1700**

I listened to some of the other members and they were talking about what things may not have been done right that our government has done. Let me assure you, there's probably nothing any of us have done that doesn't take some improvement. If we're open-minded and we want to improve it, it will happen. Change is the greatest thing in the world, but you've got to do change right. You can look back, but for goodness' sake, let's not go back.

I'm very excited, I'm still tingling about what's going on in this province and I am pleased to be part of it.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Conway:** I'd like to take some moments this afternoon to speak to the budget bill, Bill 152, in the name of our friend Mr Eves. I want to spend most of my time on part III of the bill, which deals with amendments to the Electricity Act.

My friend from Peterborough has said some things I want to just touch on briefly.

*Interjections.*

**Mr Conway:** I have to say to my friend from Peterborough, as I drove through a perfectly Siberian blizzard last night from the Ottawa Valley to Toronto, the only comforting sign I saw was along Highway 7 in the midst of this snowstorm after midnight, something that said, "We welcome Stewart Travel to Rollands," I think. That's about all I could see on an otherwise horrible trip down Highways 7 and 115.

It is true that the province of Ontario has enjoyed very robust times in the last five, six or seven years. Anyone in government would be happy to have had that sunshine. I've said before and I will say again, one would have to be particularly miserable not to say that perhaps some of what the government did helped to some degree with that prosperity.

But make no mistake about it: the engine that drives the Ontario economy is the auto industry. If you look at the Treasurer's own data, particularly the budget papers, it's astonishing the extent to which we are now dependent on our ability to make and sell automobiles and automobile parts here and export them into the American economy. I hope the last five years continue. There are some signs out of Chrysler and Ford that that's slowing down, and it may be slowing down rather sharply.



I say to my friend from Peterborough, listening to the Harris Tories the last few months reminds me of the Peterson Liberals back in the late 1980s. It is a fair criticism that we spent very liberally because we thought the revenues were just going to keep coming forever—well, maybe not forever, but at least until the next election and beyond. Do you know what? We got a very painful surprise in the latter part of 1989 and certainly into 1990. It started to change dramatically and the problem was that we had cranked spending up to this level on the basis that revenues would more or less stay where we had taken them. We were very wrong in that expectation.

A lot has been said about the New Democrats, and they have their own accounting to give for their time in office, but in fairness to Mr Rae and his government, one of the biggest problems they had is that the spending that they had helped encourage in the latter half of the 1980s remained well above where the revenue line was in 1991, 1992 and 1993.

I observe in the financial documents tabled by the Treasurer last week in the second quarter statement that we are now looking at a year, fiscal 2000-01, where revenues are expected to be at or above \$64 billion. That's absolutely incredible, wonderful. Program spending is now going to be somewhat in excess of \$50 billion, up \$7 billion in five years. That's pretty dramatic.

I was fascinated in the recent federal election campaign to hear Stockwell Day talk about fiscal planning. Has anybody looked at the Klein-Day budget that was tabled last spring? It would make a Liberal blush with embarrassment. Stockwell Day spent money like a drunken sailor. You've got to know there's an election coming, and it's good to know that the species *homo sapiens politicus* behaves very similarly on the eve of an election, regardless of his or her stripe. But the spending in the Alberta jurisdiction this year is stupendous. Certainly Mr Harris and Mr Eves are not taking a backseat to anyone when it comes to spending. If, God forbid, those revenues crest at \$64 billion and start to trend downwards to \$62 billion, \$61 billion or \$60 billion, let me tell you—now it's \$112 billion worth of accrued provincial debt—the job of the Minister of Finance for Ontario is going to get very interesting very quickly.

If you look at the Outlook document tabled by the Treasurer last week, it's not going to take very much to turn black ink into red ink. We've had growth rates in excess of 5%; for the year just ending I think 6.1% was the last number. That is phenomenal. If that growth goes to 3% or 2.5%, I'm glad I'm not going to be there, because life is going to get very difficult very quickly.

I simply make the point that, yes, there's been a lot of good news, but we have, in a very buoyant economy, added over \$22 billion to the debt of the province. I understand the argument. The Harris government said, "We are going to take our position with those who say that if you cut taxes you're going to stimulate the economy." There has been stimulus, there's no question.

There was an article in the Globe and Mail Report on Business, I think on Thursday or Friday of last week,

showing the level of consumer debt. Did anybody see that? I should have brought it with me. It was staggering, the amount of debt that individual Ontarians and Canadians have piled up on their plastic in some of the best times in the post-war period.

**Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke North):** What's the point?

**Mr Conway:** The member for Etobicoke North suggests, "What's the point?" The point is simply this: that in good times we've added \$22 billion plus to the provincial debt. That's just deferred taxation. That's all that is. Debt-servicing costs now are continuing at the \$8.9-billion, \$9-billion range.

**Mr Hastings:** So what?

**Mr Conway:** "So what?" the member says. That's as much money as we're spending on education. I tell you that if the economy goes south, a debt of \$112 billion is going to be a much more burdensome weight for Her Majesty's provincial government to carry.

So I simply say to my friend from Peterborough, who is an exemplary government loyalist, that, yes, there is good news to report, but behind the good news there are some indicators that I hope give all of us pause. It is to one of those indicators I want to turn, because, Mr Speaker, you would want me to talk more specifically about Bill 152.

Bill 152, in part III, offers a number of amendments to the Electricity Act, 1998. I want to take another opportunity to raise my concern about the current state of electricity policy in the province of Ontario. I submit, I hope not too self-interestedly, that there are few, if any, reforms that have been undertaken in the mandate of the Harris government that are more important and more likely to affect the economic and social well-being of Ontarians than the electricity reforms that were legislated here a couple of years ago. This is profoundly important, very complicated and, regrettably, highly confusing public policy. But make no mistake about it, there are dramatic changes occurring as I speak and they are about to touch on the daily life of every Ontario farmer, residential consumer and business and commercial owner in the province of Ontario.

It is a \$10-billion business, the Ontario electricity business. If you are a typical residential consumer in Ontario today, your home electricity bill is in excess of \$1,000, and that bill is going to go up and it's going to go up significantly over the next 12 to 15 months. I'm not here to say it's all the government's fault. One of the good-news items that my friend from Peterborough was just talking about was the expansion in the economy, and he's right. We have seen dramatic improvements in employment and utilization of plant and equipment in Ontario and much of North America in the last six, seven, eight years. The Americans have enjoyed the longest sustained economic growth in their history.

**1710**

But one thing that has not been growing is the electricity system to support that. There has been very little new electrical generating plant installed in Ontario,

Canada, and the United States over the last eight or nine years. One of the real problems we face today in the electricity business is there's too much demand chasing too little supply. We have legislated decontrol. We are opening up the electricity business in Ontario to market forces. What do we all remember from our high school or university economics? The law of supply and demand. You've got significantly more demand than you have supply? That means only one thing for price: price is going up.

The other thing that I think Ontarians don't yet understand about the new electricity policy that the Harris government is pursuing is that we have surrendered a century-old policy of a made-in-Ontario electricity price and policy. We are now going to let the North American market dictate the price of electricity in Pembroke, in Stoney Creek, in Toronto, in Timmins and in Rexdale. Again, the American economy is enormously thirsty. Their prices, on average in almost all categories, are significantly higher than ours. So what do you suppose that means when the market gets to determine price? Prices are going up.

One of the issues that I have for my friend the Minister of Energy, who was here a while ago and undoubtedly will be returning, is, when are we going to be told that our market is going to open? It was supposed to open in November of this year. It has been delayed. Is it going to open in May of next year? Is it going to open in the fall of next year? It is important for that signal to be given, I say to the government, if the government intends to pursue its policy—

**Mr Bisson:** Let's not do it.

**Mr Conway:** My friend from Timmins says, "Let's not do it." I think there are some very real cautionary signs that should be heeded. The idea that we are opening a market that is having all kinds of problems in other jurisdictions, like Alberta and California, to name the two obvious ones, is probably a good place to start. There is indication now that the market is being manipulated in Alberta and in parts of the United States. There was a great article in last Sunday's New York Times called "California Screaming" by a noted American economist, Paul Krugman. I haven't got the time to read it in detail, but he talks about evidentiary material that clearly suggests that the market was gamed in Britain before it opened in the mid-1990s. It was similarly gamed in California before that market opened a couple of years ago.

There are very powerful players who have an interest now in manipulating the market to their own advantage. Have you been watching the California situation? Granted, it's the worst situation in the United States, but it ought to be a very real warning sign to all of us. Look at Alberta. The Alberta government, as it faces an election, is scrambling like the dickens to avoid the wrath of the consumers. Again, what's one of the problems in Alberta? No one is committing to build new plant. Without new plant, we are not going to see prices come down. Prices are going to go up.

One of the questions I have for my friend the Minister of Energy: when are you going to open the market in Ontario, and what protections are you going to put in place so that Ontario consumers are not going to be ripped and torn asunder by the vicissitudes and the manipulations of this continental market?

I'm glad the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations has returned, able and senior minister that he is, because across my desk late last week I got this press release from Bob Runciman saying that he and his department, together with Scotiabank, I think it was, were embarking on a campaign to make people aware of fraud in the marketplace—undoubtedly a good idea. Why isn't the government of Ontario doing what it was told to do three years ago about some rigorous public information for consumers before this electricity market opens up?

Everyone from the Consumers' Association to noted academics are saying, "For heaven's sakes, you can't send millions of residential, commercial and industrial consumers into this marketplace naked." But that's what we're doing. Good for the government that they're going to have a calendar to tell senior citizens and others about fraud, but I say to the minister of consumer affairs, have he and his colleague at energy talked about doing something to make the average residential customer aware of what it is they need to be aware of before this market opens up? We're doing nothing. For a market to work, you've got to have informed consumers. Do you think the Enrons of the world are going to be out there giving all of the information that a consumer in a place like Pembroke or Stoney Creek would want and need? Absolutely not.

The Minister of Energy says that's the energy board's responsibility. I think that's maybe part of the answer. All I know is we're very late in the day, and for the market to work, you've got to have an informed consumer. The government has done little, if anything, to provide useful, understandable information to the consumer. I repeat: this electricity deregulation is not only important, it is profoundly complicated and confusing.

**Mr Crozier:** And they'll get ripped off.

**Mr Conway:** And as my friend from south Essex says, a lot of consumers are going to get ripped off.

The other question that arises is the behaviour of our provincially owned electricity companies. The Minister of Finance goes apoplectic when you tell him that after the first year or so of the operations of his successor companies, things are not as well as expected. The Provincial Auditor told us about 10 days ago that he's looked at the books and he is concerned that the long-term plan of the government of Ontario to retire over \$20 billion worth of stranded debt is not airtight and in fact may leave the taxpayers on the hook for substantial liabilities downstream. I'm not surprised to hear that. I don't think anybody was ever going to be able to give an absolute guarantee.

But I'm very troubled by the auditor's look at the first year of the so-called acceptance company, the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. That's one of the successor

companies to the old Ontario Hydro that essentially is a financial acceptance company for all of the debt and related financial instruments to this new electricity marketplace. What are we told by the auditor—and I must say, people like Tom Adams over at Energy Probe have in fact corroborated what seems to be the auditor's conclusion. After the first year at the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp, we are told by certainly people at Energy Probe that the taxpayers have had to put in an additional \$235 million to cover the additional liabilities of that operation in the first year. We are told, and this is well-known, we've got one of the successor companies—and remember, we're talking about Hydro. We're talking about a company that began with a stranded debt of over \$20 billion. All a stranded debt is is the debt that cannot be carried by the commercial successors; that stranded debt has got to be paid for over time by consumers. Bill 152 makes it plain that the so-called "debt retirement charge," which is a part of paying down the stranded debt, is going to be paid by consumers. So make no mistake about who is going to be paying these bills: they are going to be paid by electricity consumers.

We have the spectacle of this new hydro order beginning with over \$20 billion worth of stranded debt. That's not an easy mountain to climb. It's certainly not all this government's fault, but what are they allowing Hydro One, one of their successor companies, to do? They're out buying up utilities large and small. The most recent big one was Brampton Hydro. They paid \$260 million of money they had to borrow, to buy a municipal utility they appeared not to need with borrowed money, and, we're told, at a premium price. What the hell is going on? We've got a bad situation and we're allowing it to get worse. Tom Adams points out, in his National Post article of November 17, that there's even less transparency today with these Hydro successor companies than there was in the bad old days.

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I say to my friends in this Legislature, government and opposition, this is our responsibility. This is on our watch. We are spending virtually no time looking at what's going on. I repeat: it's not easy, but it's hugely important. I wonder how much time is being spent in cabinet. Having been there, I understand the pressures of time and, particularly, the difficulties of trying to engage a subject of this complexity. We owe it to the electricity consumers of Ontario; we owe it to those who, like my friend from Peterborough, want to keep the good times going, to hold far more to account these hydro companies for what they're doing and not doing, because one of the blackest clouds on the Ontario economic horizon is this electricity reform. We were told prices would go down. It is manifestly the case that they're not going down in the short- and intermediate-term. I think this Legislature has got to get on with doing a better job of holding the hydro companies to account for what they're doing to us.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions or comments?

**Mr Bisson:** To the member from Renfrew, I agree with you. First of all, he says, "When are we going to

hear when the government is going to come in and actually do the deregulation in the Ontario market?" As I yelled out during his speech, I hope not, because quite frankly in the examples we've seen in Alberta and other places where they have gone in and deregulated the market, hydro rates are now starting to go up, for exactly the reason he makes in his comments, and that is that there are people who stand to gain—and I would argue probably in the billions of dollars—of profit in a deregulated market. Unfortunately, those who are going to be stuck paying the bills are the consumers of the province of Ontario, and that is both residential consumers and industrial consumers.

I think that is bad for the economy. In fact, just recently, we're now starting to see in Alberta, where they've already gone ahead and done what Mike Harris has done in Ontario—they've actually done the step of deregulating the hydro side and privatizing—they're now seeing that residential and industrial users are going before the Alberta government and saying, "Re-regulate it, because you made a mistake. Ralph Klein, come clean. Tell people you were wrong and re-regulate the industry." I find that's quite telling, coming from the industrial sector.

I would also argue when it comes to the issue of deregulation—something that this government, the Conservatives, are very fond of—the facts are and the proof is that deregulation does not always work. If we look at the trucking industry, deregulation has been a mess for the truck drivers of the province of Ontario and those who own the trucks. Who has gained? It has been the shippers. If we take a look at what happened in the energy sector when it comes to gas, well, my God, just go to a gas pump and see what's happened over the past number of years. Yes, part of that is OPEC, but also part of it is getting rid of programs like the national energy program.

I believe that deregulation is wrong for the sake of just doing it, and in fact in this case we're going to pay more.

**Mr Brad Clark (Stoney Creek):** It's a pleasure to comment on the speech given by the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. It's amazing how quickly the political sands shift beneath our feet. I've only been elected about a year and a half, and when I first came into the House, I was told that the tax cuts wouldn't create jobs and I was told that the tax cuts were bad, and yet now we see that even the federal government is doing the tax cuts. I was also told that we weren't spending enough money on education, we weren't spending enough money on health care, we weren't spending enough money anywhere and that we had cut, cut, cut. Now of course, we find out that we're spending more than any previous government. So it's amazing how the sands shift beneath us.

There was a gathering down in the United States at Duke University. They were speaking about the economy and a well-known individual stood up and made this statement about the tax system for Canada. He said our tax system is now very competitive with the Americans.

"If you look at Ontario, the income tax in Ontario, provincial and federal together, is competitive with New York, Michigan, California and the state of Washington. Corporate tax too. But the payroll tax in Canada is much lower than in the US."

The esteemed individual who was making that statement was the Right Honourable Mr Chrétien, Prime Minister of Canada. So at this particular point in time even the Prime Minister of Canada is now stating that Ontario's tax system is, by and large, far better than the other provinces in the country and has made it very clear that Ontario's income tax system is competitive with New York, Michigan, California and Washington.

Quite clearly, we have done our job in Ontario. What I do find fascinating is the shifting sand, that as we move through this process, we're not spending enough; now we're spending too much; tax cuts don't create jobs; but then again they do.

**Mr Crozier:** I'm pleased to rise and comment on my colleague from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke's statement to the House here this evening. There are few in this House who would give more credit where credit is due than would my colleague Mr Conway. There are also few in this House who could so eloquently warn the government of where some of the pitfalls may be. I think he has done that this evening.

Maybe the sands have changed. Maybe some of us didn't give enough credit where it was due at the beginning because we were concerned. I can recall when Mike Harris was the leader of the third party and he said, "This province is bankrupt." So when he came in with tax cuts, I said to myself, "What business would start out, when getting its financial house in order, if it were bankrupt, by giving its shareholders a dividend?" That was my only question at the time. Why not get the financial house in order first, then give the dividend? It was a question of timing. If it has worked out that it has been more beneficial that way, all the better.

I think what we have to do is take heed of what Mr Conway has said tonight, particularly in the area of energy. He gave some examples. This evening in California there very well might be brownouts because of the problems they're having. That's what we have to be careful of and avoid.

I think of the north when it comes to high energy prices. I can only think that these high energy prices are going to be devastating to the north. What's it going to do to their economy? We have to think of that. We have to be prepared to continue to shift the sands so that we attempt to do the right thing in the near- and long-term future.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** Just out of respect for the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, I want to respond to his remarks. I have some respect for the comments he made.

I just want to move back a little bit. This is about budget and about Finance Minister Ernie Eves's statement. I was quite surprised to hear the lack of sound from the member from Scarborough-Agincourt, because really

it's clear: the revenue is up about \$14 billion to \$15 billion. It isn't all because of Premier Harris and Finance Minister Eves, but certainly doing the right things at the right time are absolutely important. I think we complemented many decisions to the extent where the federal government is now copying some of the capital gains tax initiatives we've started. In fact, they're looking at the whole tax-cuts-create-jobs initiative. Imitation is the best form of flattery.

But I think the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke makes a very good point. The breaking down of Ontario Hydro, as he would know—he's been the critic and has followed this for many years—probably was a good way to reconcile all the debt they had accumulated, and it was stranded debt on top of that, and that was a problem for whoever formed the government. But I think what's happened, by breaking it into generation—which is what we call OPG today, Ontario Power Generation—on that side the equation is working. I believe there is investment and competition, there are tax rule changes to encourage more environmental friendliness, and those are all the right things to do on the generation side. There were big investments just announced last week in Sarnia.

On the distribution side I agree with him wholeheartedly. I'm one who championed Veridian, the first in my area to go and form some local boards and take over two or three municipal—but when I look at what's happening, and you countered it in your remarks, I too question where the money is coming from. And who's going to underwrite that debt unless they're a publicly traded company?

So it's a very good debate, but overall the government is on the right track. By having revenues increase, jobs are up. What more could you ask for?

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** Well, Speaker—  
*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Just one second. We've had four? I'm losing track. The member for—

**Mr Conway:** I wanted to make a couple of quick observations.

First to my friend from Stoney Creek: listen, we will find out the strength and the durability of the new financial architecture after we have a couple of quarters of poor economic performance. It may be that they will never come, in which case this government has entered Elysium and has nothing to worry about. But it may be that we have a few quarters of negative or very slow growth. We may then find ourselves at the exchequer looking at a very different prospect. I hope it doesn't happen, but I'll tell you, looking at the second-quarter statements, it won't take much to turn this thing from black to red ink.

**1730**

I want to finally say, about energy, that there was no choice for the government of Ontario in the mid-1990s. We had to embark upon a new approach. I agreed in the beginning with what I thought was the government's intention, which was to create competition in the generation of electricity. That's where they started out, but they

have not pursued that objective. Crazy, they have now bought into this maniacal scheme that's been fathered and mothered over at the new Hydro that we have to remonopolize, particularly in the distribution sector. That's insanity. The price of electricity will only come down when you get more generation into the system. That's the problem across the continent. It's not an easy problem to fix. The old order had to be altered. I voted against Bill 35 two years ago because I just was not confident, on the basis of a lot of testimony, that the government's plan was consistent with the Legislature's objective. I am now very worried that the economic health and prosperity of this province are in dire jeopardy.

We were told by the energy board just a couple of months ago that, with no change, Ontario Hydro customers are going to see, minimally, a 13% rate increase once the freeze is lifted and the market opens, and I think the increase is going to be substantially more than 13%. I hope—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. Further debate?

**Mr Galt:** It's certainly a pleasure to be able to speak on Bill 152, the Balanced Budgets for Brighter Futures Act. There's no question that with the finances, what has happened in the province of Ontario, brighter futures certainly are in store. I was interested in listening to the member from Essex comment about a bankrupt province, what our Premier said prior to 1995. He was absolutely right: we were headed into bankruptcy. But I would suggest that the member from Essex have a look at Economics 101, and look at elasticity of demand and elasticity of supply. I think he would start to understand why reduced taxes increase activity, create jobs and we end up with more revenue. The very opposite occurred in the early 1990s: when taxes were increased we ended up with far less revenue. I'm pleased to hear the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke talking about competition and that competition is good, particularly with the power generation companies.

I think we're in good shape in the province of Ontario, mainly because of the hard work of our Premier, being so committed to attracting investment into Ontario and also at the same time improving the quality of life that we as Ontarians are now able to enjoy. I know the opposition and special interest groups would really like to see Ontario again go backwards, and that's exactly where we would be if in fact we listened to them. We vowed to keep Ontario strong and we are committed to a brighter future in this province.

It's been interesting, in the last month or so, being in several Santa Claus parades in my riding and observing the crowds out to see those parades. As a matter of fact, those crowds have been record-sized, crowds never seen in these communities before, like Campbellford and Quinte West, parades in Brighton and Cobourg, Colborne and Port Hope and Warkworth. Some of those have initiated new-style evening parades, particularly in Warkworth and Colborne. I did miss the one in the village of Hastings, unfortunately. It didn't matter which commu-

ity I was in, it was a change from the parades of 1995 and 1996, where people were just standing there, glum. Now there are cheery-looking people with smiling faces. People were chattering along the parade routes, something I had not heard in the other years, particularly back in the mid-1990s.

I suggest that the change in these crowds is a result of the economy that's been created in this province, the improved government efficiency. As a result of that we've increased the number of jobs. People are much happier, of course, when they have jobs.

This booming economy is part of why those jobs are there. The members in the opposition ask why. Well, we go back to the economy being stimulated with those tax cuts, even though they wouldn't want to admit it. With the tax cuts, of course, it's just like an automatic raise when you're working, a tax-free allowance sort of thing, and that's happened right across the board, particularly for those with low incomes, with hundreds of thousands of Ontarians not having to pay a provincial portion of income tax and tremendous cuts for many others, and also enjoying the \$200 tax rebate that all Ontarians received, provided they had paid at least \$200 in income tax during this past year.

It's interesting to be in the shopping malls and in the various stores and to see people buying gifts for loved ones, something they really didn't have the money for some five or six years ago. That in itself is stimulating the economy, those dollars pouring in, of course coming from the extra money in their pockets because of those tax cuts.

I have to apologize to my Liberal friends, because there are some traffic jams around these parking lots. Sometimes you have to park way on the far side of the parking lot and walk a long way to get to the stores, but that's what happens when people have extra money and they're buying goods. I have to also apologize to them for some of the traffic jams on the highways, because there are 830,000 more people working than were working in 1995. I know there are goods being moved in transports; there's a record number of transports on the highways that are moving those goods. So I say to the members in the opposition, I'm sorry there are so many people out there with extra money who are able to buy all those goods, but that's just the way it goes when there is a booming economy stimulated by those tax cuts.

I'd like to spend a few minutes talking about the brighter futures that have resulted because of some of the major projects in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, particularly through the rural job strategy fund. That's a three-year, \$30-million fund that was kicked off back in 1997. This is a fund that was designed to invest in projects that would improve the quality enhancement in community marketing and information technology; also to increase exports, lead to investment, contribute to rural economic development and create alliances and partnerships in those communities.

That's exactly what's happened in my riding. Last April, the minister, the Honourable Ernie Hardeman, was

there to announce a \$1.65-million project over two years to create some 1,000 jobs in that great riding of Northumberland. A lot of hard work went into this, developing the protocol to put forward to the ministry as well as making these projects work. Certainly my congratulations to them.

The project was broken into five categories. The first one is Spirit of the Hills, which is a partnership with the arts community. One that really stands out in my mind is the Westben Arts Festival Theatre. They have built a barn. It's a not-for-profit organization. They put on musical productions during the month of July, and this coming summer it's going to expand. There's tremendous professionalism and tremendous volunteer participation in this project. I can tell you that this theatre, just a little west of Campbellford, has ignited the entire community. They're bringing in phenomenal artists, musicians from Toronto and Montreal, and they are adding a lot to the riding of Northumberland.

The second one I'd mention is Revitalizing Downtown Northumberland, and that's going on in Port Hope, Hastings, Campbellford, Cobourg, Colborne and Gore's Landing.

There's also Heritage in Northumberland County. That's about some of the museums, such as the Cobourg Military Museum and the great Farini Circus Museum, as well as the Roseneath Carousel.

The fourth of the five groupings that have brought dollars in is Tourism Events for All Seasons, some six events that are co-operating and working together in a joint marketing strategy. Now they won't be battling with each other for those tourism dollars but rather working together to bring in busloads of people to tour the county, see the various things such as Northumberland Lights, the Warkworth Rodeo, the Rural Ramble and several of the fairs that are held in Northumberland. There is also Tour the Country in the County. This is an expanded, customized group tour, a pooling of their marketing dollars. It involves organizations like Eastview Farms, the Northumberland apple route, River Country and the Heritage Shores Association.

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There has been a lot of gnashing of teeth. I just wanted to make a few comments about this gnashing of teeth over the cost of electricity, particularly by the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. We went from having one of the cheapest electricity rates in North America back in 1985 to in 1995 having one of the most expensive. The Ford Motor Co told us we went from the first in their 17 regions where they produce cars to the 14th-most expensive. The rates, in the early 1990s were absolutely spiralling out of control. Did we do the perfect thing? That I don't know, but something certainly had to be done to get that \$30-billion-plus debt that Ontario Hydro had.

In closing, compliments to our Premier for his leadership and hard work, for attracting investment and a better quality of life to the province of Ontario. Thanks to the Ontario rural job strategy fund for making life better for

the people of Northumberland. The government has the right plan to create a strong and growing economy in this great province of Ontario. Just in my last minutes I'd like to wish all of my constituents in Northumberland a very merry Christmas and a very happy and prosperous new year.

**Mr Sergio:** Just a couple of comments in the brief two minutes that I have to respond. Let me say that at this particular time I wish we had a government, that we had a Premier who really would be concerned with the people's people, those people who need a real hand up, especially at this particular time of the year.

I want to address this to the Premier himself: do you know how many calls I've had from seniors saying, "When am I going to get my \$200?" This would have been a wonderful time, and what a deed it would have been on behalf of the government and the Premier to say to the seniors, "Yes, indeed, we owe you big-time. Here is a couple of hundred dollars." But do you know what they say when they don't get the \$200 or \$100 or \$50? "They take from us, but then when it comes time to really look at us, they don't give us anything." Especially now, look outside, how cold the weather is. Our member for Renfrew just said gas is going to go up, electricity is going to go up. We read the papers; they read the papers like we do, and they say, "Everything is going up. Now we're going to be spending another \$600 to \$800 more this season on top of all the expenses, on top of all the cuts, on top of all the user fees that the government has been unloading on us, and the government is not doing anything to assist us."

This would have been a wonderful opportunity, going into the holiday period: assist the most needy people in our society. But instead we have a government that is bent on not giving a hand up to those people who really need it. We have so many thousands of children living in poverty. They won't have a gift this Christmas. Are they thinking about that?

To the members who say, "We have another 800,000 people spending money," I wonder where they are. I think this is a good time for the Premier and the government to rethink their position.

**Mr Bisson:** I listened to the member for Northumberland and I repeat what has been said here before, that the government members are really fond of getting up and trying to crow about just how much good their government has done when it comes to building the economy of Ontario. But I just warn you, we can now see the signs coming by way of the predictors—the predictors that say we're going to be having problems with our economy. One predictor is that exports, when it comes to lumber, are down. We're seeing less production of lumber going on now. We're also seeing what's happening in the auto industry.

So I say to the member across the way, is he going to be standing up here afterwards saying this was the result of his government and his government's policy when we do see the next cycle come? That's the problem: they're a bunch of revisionists. They really believe the bunk that

they put forward as being the gospel truth. The reality is that the Ontario economy is affected by the cycles of the North American and the world economy. That explains a lot of what we saw through the 1980s and 1990s.

To the issue of hydro, I say to the member across the way, he gets up and talks about the wonderful job they've done with hydro. Number one, it was the Bob Rae government that froze hydro rates. We did that in 1992-93. It wasn't Mike Harris. Number two is, you guys have moved to deregulate and to privatize Ontario Hydro, something that we're now seeing in Alberta and we've already seen in California, where it's been done before and been nothing but disaster at the consumer level, both when it comes to individuals and when it comes to industry itself.

So I just say to the member across the way, I would have thought he'd have learned a bit of humility after his last little exploit in the House. It's pretty apparent that he didn't. If he plans on getting to cabinet, this is certainly not the way to do it.

**Mr Hastings:** As usual, it's absolutely fascinating listening to the voices across the way. The member for Timmins-James Bay is one of the first to recite how great the Bob Rae government was, so they're in the same mantra as they were six years ago. If I recall, back in 1991-92 we had something called the recession. The recession was pretty devastating to the people in this province, at whatever station in life.

What did we do? The great solution then was to pump-prime the whole economy: spend, put more money into the whole operation. So they upped the deficit to at least \$100 billion. But that was OK. Then we hear the story from the members opposite that the real reason for jobs in this province has hardly anything to do with tax reduction. So, as I've said before at least eight times in the last two years—except the member for Hamilton West. He did actually accept the challenge once to the thesis that a high-taxed jurisdiction does not necessarily bring about economic progress, does not bring about the huge number of jobs that the private sector has created in this province.

To the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, it's interesting to hear that he cites the story about Hydro, but we have seldom heard a specific solution from the Grits opposite as to what they would be doing if they were here in the given circumstances of a deregulated hydro situation throughout North America. Would we go back to re-freezing rates? Is that where he's at? Is he also proposing that we wall off Ontario from the North American economy? I'm doubtful if you can do that, even if you wish it. Let's get real over there for once.

**Mr Conway:** I'm happy to say again that I think the government of Ontario was given advice a couple of years ago that it chose not to follow. The absolute key to energy at the present moment is creating an environment where there is going to be more, not less, generating capacity. The government was told by the Macdonald group and others that that was the cornerstone to good policy. What we've now got is a situation where we've

got a bigger Hydro. We've got the remonopolization over on the distribution side.

The member for Guelph is here. She was a minister for a few years a couple of years ago. Was there anybody talking in 1995-97 about making Ontario Hydro Retail bigger? Nobody. And making it bigger with borrowed money? Nobody.

**Mr Young:** You sound like the mayor of Toronto.

**Mr Conway:** Listen, this is complicated stuff. I want to say that one of the things that gets the political class a bad name—I have to say it, and it's not all on one side of the House—is when we get some apparently bright, well-educated, professional person getting up here just mouthing a bunch of transparently insulting platitudes about 1985-95, that before there was an abyss and after that there was just unrelieved joy and prosperity. Irving Layton had a phrase for that kind of politics: nauseous crapperoo. We just owe it to ourselves and to our constituents, and particularly when you are a doctor of veterinary medicine, to treat the Legislature and the people of Ontario with something more than the kind of contempt that can be taken from those kinds of remarks. The electricity issue deserves more than that kind of partisan, platitudinous, nauseous crapperoo.

1750

**The Deputy Speaker:** Response?

**Mr Galt:** Thank you, Speaker, and thanks in particular to the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for his very kind and thoughtful remarks. Also, thanks to the members for York West and Timmins-James Bay, and particularly to my good friend from Etobicoke North.

I notice the member for York West was talking quite a bit about poverty, saying, "If there are 830,000 jobs, where is the money coming from? Where are they?" Have a look at the revenue. Have a look at what's coming in the budget: approximately \$10 billion more revenue coming in than in 1995. That's a pretty significant increase in revenue to the province, and it has to be coming from somebody who's out there working. Particularly when you take into account the tax cuts, the ones who were working before are actually paying less.

The member for Timmins-James Bay talked about the economic cycle, and he's absolutely right. When the economy is bitten or something happens to the Americans and it goes down, yes, Ontario is going to be affected. But how that's going to be handled and how it'll play out depends on what we do, just as we did in 1995. Will we go down as fast as the Americans? It's hard to say. It depends on the kind of economic policies we have in Ontario whether we go down like we did in the early 1990s, when you tried to spend your way out of a recession—disastrous direction; it didn't work.

Hydro has been beaten on here, but with what we were faced with in 1995, a debt of over \$30 billion—yes, I give the NDP credit for having at least frozen the rates to the consumer, but at the same time nothing more was done. Sooner or later, something had to happen, and we have taken the bull by the horns, so to speak, and are trying, through what we are doing, to make rates more competitive into the future.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River):** I'm always amazed by the titles this government puts on bills. I see it's the Balanced Budgets for Brighter Futures Act. What a wonderful title. It's so nice. But it's like when you see a glass. You look inside and it's all dirty.

I've got a few minutes and I want to bring it down to the level where I can understand and many of my constituents can get at this ramble about legislative process. Let's talk about the debt. This wonderful, responsible government said they took over the accounts of this province and they were in chaos, that they had a huge debt on their hands. Now they're in their second term, and they're so buoyant about the economy and so much revenue is coming in. You would feel that if other governments had made a huge debt and handed it to them, they would say, "The first thing I'm going to do is pay down this debt." Do you understand that the debt did not reduce, it increased? The people across this province are saying, "This is the"—

**Interjection:** How much?

**Mr Curling:** I'll soon tell you the amount. It has increased. Just to finance the larger debt they have created, they pay \$8.9 billion for interest to keep the debt going. That's only the interest, so you can start calculating. If this is a responsible government, they should be paying far less on a reduced debt. But they're paying more. Why are they paying more on the debt? Because the debt has increased. But that doesn't make sense. This government is supposed to have a brighter future for the people of this province.

When the children who are here today have grown up and have jobs, they will have a debt on their hands. If they were to start working today—let me speak to the children, the young people here today. If you get a job right now—this government has over a \$120-billion debt. They have increased it. They're going to say to you, "What a bright future I'm handing to young people here and to your parents across this province. I've given you greater debt." Many of them, especially the Minister of Community and Social Services, would say, "Look what we have done: we have given these people jobs." But they have also said, "Look what we have done: all the corporations are now paying far less taxes. Whoopee." They are paying far less to all the people on welfare in order to do far more debt.

Their responsibility has increased, and they have taken that kind of money from the people who need it most to finance the big corporations. You'd think that even if they did that they would have tried to pay off some of that money. You see, in this kind of government it's the poor who have caused this great debt. But let me tell the young people too: do you realize that those big corporations owe more taxes to the government that would have paid off all the debt it has, if they would just pay their taxes? But this government would not do that. If they did that, they would be offending the people who are sponsoring them, who come to their fundraisers. If they turn them off and tell them to pay their taxes, we can balance our budget for a brighter future.

The brighter future they speak of is not for people outside today, whom the member from Renfrew spoke of eloquently. They are cold today and they'll be colder tomorrow because they can't pay their heating bill, because this government has privatized and deregulated and said to the private sector, "Go ahead. It's all about profit." It's nothing about warmth. It's nothing about keeping the constituents they were elected to protect. They are there to protect the pockets of the corporations, to say, "Make more money, more profits. Then, when we have enough, what we'll do"—when you go to university they'll tell you it's called the trickle-down theory. When they have eaten enough, they won't eat any more; they'll pass it on.

If they build big, exotic homes, then later on they'll build homes that are affordable for those at the bottom. But those in the lower strata are not able to afford the houses up there. They have to wait in the cold, not only while they're waiting for the cost of homes, which is escalating, but the heating bills are greater.

You wonder about the brighter future this government has envisioned for this province, that they have selected the constituents they want a brighter future for: "We'll make a brighter future for anyone who is making millions of dollars." They will hear the jingle of Santa Claus. Of course, they are laughing all the way, all the elves who are following. These are the elves of the corporations, who are running around making sure the stockings of the corporate factors are filled. They say, "Ho, ho, ho, what a merry Christmas I have given you all."

The people you were elected by—are you supporting those who are discouraged and disillusioned and those who are disabled and need the support of a government, because you've taken their taxes to do so? No. The brighter future means the debt has gone up. We're going to balance what budget? What budget are you going to balance? Is it only one side of the budget that you balance? I thought a balance meant all factors. I thought you paid off your debt, and then you had a balanced budget. But you don't have a balanced budget. You have greater debt that you will pass on to our young people later, who will be paying a higher finance.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Curling:** My colleague asks where I took economics. It's easy to say, "We've taken economics." If I am paying more now to finance my debt, if I owe more, my economics tell me you're in greater problems. You are in greater problems today because you owe more.

Mr Speaker, I know you would like me to wrap up because it's 6 o'clock. Of course, in my generous heart I'd like to wish my colleagues merry Christmas, but don't forget the poor. Ho, ho, ho. Merry Christmas. I'd like to say to those who are cold outside that this government has the ability to do so.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers  
Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller  
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman  
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
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Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hastings-Frontenac- Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Beaches-East York	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Huron-Bruce	<b>Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen</b> (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, minister responsible for seniors and women / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs, ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées et à la Condition féminine
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
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Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kitchener-Waterloo	<b>Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth</b> (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Burlington	<b>Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron</b> (PC) Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme	Lanark-Carleton	<b>Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.</b> (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister of Correctional Services, government House leader / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre des Services correctionnels leader parlementaire du gouvernement
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Don Valley West / -Ouest	<b>Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David</b> (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Markham	<b>Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.</b> (PC) Solicitor General / solliciteur général
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Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	<b>Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John</b> (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Erie-Lincoln	<b>Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim</b> (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines		
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)		
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Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)		
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Brenda (PC)		
Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)		
Haliburton-Victoria-Brock	<b>Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris</b> (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion		
Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)		
Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
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Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	<b>Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan</b> (PC) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Nipissing	<b>Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.</b> (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	<b>Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Oak Ridges	<b>Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank</b> (PC) Minister without Portfolio / ministre sans portefeuille	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Oakville	<b>Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary</b> (PC) Speaker / Président	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stoney Creek	Clark, Brad (PC)
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Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
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Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
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		York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Règlements et projets de loi privés**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Garfield Dunlop  
Gilles Bisson, Claudette Boyer, Brian Coburn,  
Garfield Dunlop, Raminder Gill, Pat Hoy,  
Frances Lankin, Bill Murdoch  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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