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of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 30 May 2001

Mercredi 30 mai 2001

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 30 May 2001

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 30 mai 2001

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

RESPONSIBLE CHOICES FOR GROWTH
AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT
(2001 BUDGET), 2001

LOI DE 2001
SUR DES CHOIX RÉFLÉCHIS
FAVORISANT LA CROISSANCE
ET LA RESPONSABILISATION
(BUDGET DE 2001)

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 29, 2001, on the motion for second reading of Bill 45, An Act to implement measures contained in the 2001 Budget and to amend various statutes / Projet de loi 45, Loi mettant en oeuvre des mesures mentionnées dans le budget de 2001 et modifiant diverses lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Frank Mazzilli): Further debate?

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford): I'm very pleased to rise to speak on the budget bill, Bill 45. I want to speak about accountability. In the 2000 and 2001 budgets, the Minister of Finance announced the largest investments ever made in Ontario's post-secondary education system. Our young people are our future. The government continues to take action to ensure that post-secondary education is accessible to all qualified and willing students. We also want to make sure that opportunities are available in all areas of post-secondary education.

More young people are pursuing higher education than in the past. In the fall of 2003, a record number of students will enter post-secondary institutions when all grade 12 and OAC students will graduate together for the first time. For colleges and universities, this bill increases operating support by a projected \$293 million by the year 2003-04. This is support that is crucially needed to address the pressures that will result from secondary school reform, which changes the high school program from a five-year program to four years, as well as other factors.

We are committed to quality education. The government is addressing the pressures that arise as a result of this double cohort from more students wishing to pursue higher education and from demographic growth in the 18

to 24 age group. We are building on previous measures to ensure that post-secondary education in Ontario is accessible to all qualified and willing students.

The government has already provided more than \$1 billion to the SuperBuild Corp to expand and modernize post-secondary facilities, thereby creating more than 73,000 new spaces for students. Together with its partners, the government will invest a total of \$1.8 billion, the largest post-secondary capital investment in education in more than 30 years.

We are planning ahead and committing ourselves today to the level of operating funding we will provide to post-secondary institutions over the next three years. We must provide for our young people to prepare them for the working world beyond college and university. We must ensure they're able to develop the skills they need to meet the needs of the 21st century.

We understand that to build a strong economy we must invest in our young people. The report of the Investing in Students Task Force has stated, "There is a need to expand the vision"—for the 21st century—"by recognizing the differentiated missions for post-secondary education institutions and supporting them through goals, actions and investment."

The province is providing a one-time investment of \$60 million to create a new and innovative institution. The proposed Ontario Institute of Technology, also known as OIT, in Durham region would focus on preparing students for careers that call for both practical skills and a theoretical background. It would offer both university degrees and college diplomas and give students the choice of moving between college and university courses. Starting in the years 2003-04, in time for the double cohort that is at that time entering post-secondary education, OIT will provide a range of new market-driven programs in areas such as health science, advanced manufacturing, business and information technology, and nuclear technology and safety.

OIT is another example of developing partnerships. Along with the provincial investment, Durham and its community partners would be responsible for funding the additional capital required and other start-up costs associated with the establishment of the institution. The province's capital funding will be used to build a new facility on Durham's current campus to include instructional facilities for 6,500 students, furniture, equipment, information technology and a library.

To respond to the critical shortage in skilled trades that threatens Ontario's ability to maintain a competitive position in the global economy, the province is com-

mitting \$33 million annually by the years 2004-05 to double the entrance to apprenticeship programs. This initiative will build on the apprenticeship reforms that have already been put in place, including the expansion of the Ontario youth apprenticeship program and introduction of the apprenticeship innovation fund announced in the year 2000.

This budget also provides an additional \$50 million over five years to renew equipment and facilities in colleges for apprenticeship through the apprenticeship enhancement fund.

With these investments, we will provide our young people with certainty for the future. With these investments in post-secondary education, we will ensure there will be a place for Ontario's young people in post-secondary institutions. By doing this, we are taking the necessary steps to ensure a bright and vibrant future for our economy and our province.

I also want to talk about some of the tax measures that are found in Bill 45. This is designed to continue prosperity for Ontarians. This bill is about responsible choices and, in particular, responsible choices in support of growth that enables Ontario to remain strong and competitive. Growth is essential to provide continued support for health care, education and other priority services. In order to maintain growth, taxes must be competitive. Barriers to economic growth, such as high taxes, threaten jobs, our standard of living and future employment opportunities. We are honouring our tax cut pledges and, in doing so, strengthening our economy. Economic strength allows us to preserve the exceptional quality of life that Ontarians deserve and that encourages others to make Ontario their place to live, work and raise a family.

Under previous governments, high taxes and big government were the order of the day, and look at the results. From January 1990 to May 1995, Ontario lost 89,000 jobs, while the rest of Canada created 320,000 jobs. In contrast, since our government's first throne speech, about half of the new jobs created in Canada have been in the province of Ontario. In fact, 846,500 net new jobs have been created in Ontario since 1995. Ontario's economy has grown by almost 25%. As we said before, the debate is over. Tax cuts create jobs and growth.

Ontario's job growth has been exceptional since tax cuts were first announced by this government. Ontario's total employment has grown 16% compared to only 10.6% in the rest of Canada and 8.5% in the United States. In the five years prior to tax cuts, real GDP per person fell in Ontario. In the five years since tax cuts, real GDP per person has risen about 16%, well in excess of the increase in the rest of Canada or the average of the industrialized countries.

Growth has enabled us to preserve and build on our successes to not only create jobs, but increase investments in the things that are important to the people of this province, namely, to produce three consecutive balanced budgets, something that no other Ontario government has done in nearly 100 years, and to make the largest

contribution toward paying down the debt—a figure of \$3 billion. And here is more proof of the impact of tax cuts on growth and jobs: Ontario experienced its best two consecutive years of growth since the 1980s, when the economy grew by 11.9% in both 1999 and 2000. Consensus for real GDP growth in 2001 is 2.3% and 3.6% in 2002, and the job growth is expected to continue in 2001 and to accelerate in 2002.

As our finance minister said in his budget speech earlier this month, "Tax cuts helped make us leaders and they will help to keep us leaders." Every province in Canada is following our tax cut lead, and to our credit, so is the highest government in the land. But the federal government could do a lot more for the 735,000 lower-income earners who, we've been told, would be able to keep their income tax money but who would still pay income tax to the government of Canada.

Bill 45, if passed, would cement another Mike Harris government commitment by completing the 20% personal income tax cut promised in the year 1999. This promise could benefit an extremely high number of people: 95% of Ontario taxpayers, including virtually everyone in the province who earns less than \$100,000 a year, would see Ontario tax savings of at least 20%. What this would mean for an individual family with two working parents and two children and an income of \$60,000 is \$2,345 less paid in Ontario personal income tax.

We are proud of our efforts over the past few years to return money to all Ontario taxpayers and in particular to those with lower incomes; however, there are other Ontario taxpayers who deserve some relief on their pay stubs and when filling out their income tax returns. Bill 45 says it's time to also look at how much tax is paid by the middle-class families in Ontario. The personal income surtax impacts Ontario taxpayers with incomes of at least \$54,000. These are not rich people by any means. We propose in this bill to take the first step toward eliminating this surtax burden on 340,000 middle class families, by raising the surtax threshold so that no one earning less than \$70,000 would pay the surtax and the remaining surtax payers would pay less surtax. The surtax is two-tiered and it is calculated as a percentage of basic Ontario tax in excess of specified amounts; in other words, thresholds. Starting in the year 2001, the surtax thresholds are indexed to inflation to ensure that non-surtax payers whose incomes rise at the rate of inflation will not become surtax payers.

We're not only looking at eliminating the tax for some, but also making sure that no one is added to the ranks simply due to inflation. On January 1, 2003, the first tier of the Ontario surtax would be eliminated and Ontario surtax would be calculated as 56% of basic Ontario tax in excess of \$4,491, indexed after the year 2001. This means that a single-earner couple with two children and employment income of up to \$73,540 would not pay any surtax. By raising the level at which the surtax would be payable, we would be giving more people of this province more money to spend and invest.

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It's worth repeating here that tax dollars belong to the hard-working families in this province, not the government.

Since we started cutting taxes, tax revenues have increased by more than \$15 billion and business investment has increased by 66%. Tax cuts since 1995 will provide more than \$16 billion in benefits to people and businesses in Ontario when fully implemented. Tax cuts like the personal income tax surtax that Bill 45 proposes to eliminate, or begin to eliminate, allows Ontarians to keep more of their income and invest their money however they want. This helps the economy to grow and the result is growth we can all enjoy.

As I continue here, I want to speak also on health care. Let the record be clear that health care is one of this government's top spending priorities. We have invested as no other government before in this vital area. This year alone we are increasing base health operating spending by \$1.2 billion or 5.4%. In fact, we have increased our investment in health care by almost \$6 billion since we came to office. But these unprecedented increases in health care spending are simply not sustainable. We must make the system work better and more efficiently.

One of the first steps in health care reform is accountability. The people of Ontario have a right to know they are getting value for the money they invest in health care. They must know that not one penny is misspent. That is the responsible thing to do. For too long in this province we have rewarded poor performance by funding hospital deficits each year. Under this system, there is no incentive to achieve better results. That is why we intend to encourage all hospitals to strive for excellence and efficiency. We must be accountable for every dollar of taxpayer money we spend, whether it goes to a hospital, a public school, a university or any other transfer partner in the broader public sector.

I would like to take this moment to elaborate a little more on this government's views on accountability. "Accountability" is a word the general public frequently hears from politicians at every level, perhaps a little too frequently, as the word can sometimes lose its true meaning, particularly from the federal Liberals whose actions do not always follow their intentions. Last year we witnessed the flagrant lack of accountability at the federal department, Human Resources Development Canada. Hundreds of millions of dollars were spent with no solid accountability and with no solid responsibility. In fact, the federal Auditor General recently criticized the fact that most senior executives at Human Resources Development Canada received pay bonuses.

Let me define the Ontario government's definition of "accountability." Accountability is the way in which organizations and their workers must answer to and take responsibility for their performance to those who pay for and use their services. Those people are the taxpayers of Ontario. Without accountability, faith and respect in all government institutions would not exist. We solidly believe that tax dollars belong to the hard-working people

of Ontario and not the government. Taxpayer citizens and users of government services expect, in fact demand, that the government deliver quality services in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

The government has improved and will continue improving its own ability to deliver value-for-money services directly to the public, but the time has come to ensure its transfer partners, who deliver many government programs, do the same. More than 80% of program and capital spending is in the form of transfer payments that go to our transfer partners, which include hospitals, schools and universities. These organizations, like the government of Ontario, are accountable to the taxpayers of this province and to others who fund them.

The proposed Public Sector Accountability Act that our government would bring in would require all major public sector organizations that receive taxpayer dollars from our government to do the following: prepare and deliver a yearly balanced budget; initiate best practices by measuring performance against goals and reporting publicly on progress made; promote a stronger focus on results and quality service; prepare a plan on identified objectives and to provide information on results and the quality of service achieved.

The Public Sector Accountability Act would require major public sector organizations to prepare an annual report. They would be required to make their annual report, including their audited financial statements and their business plan, available to the government, but more importantly, they must also be made available to the public. That is accountability to the taxpayers who fund them and the people who rely on their services.

But let me be perfectly clear: while we believe that all public organizations should be accountable, it is the intention of the government that the requirements of this bill initially would apply only to major organizations. The bill would permit regulations to be made to ensure that they would not apply to every small public organization in the province. It must be emphasized that accountability does not end when the books are balanced. True accountability goes far beyond the numbers. The purpose of this proposed act is to move and improve the broader public sector, not shame and blame. We expect our transfer partners to identify and demonstrate areas where they excel and cite areas where there is need for improvement.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): Thank you, Speaker, and I certainly congratulate you on your time in the chair.

I did want to comment on the speech by the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford. He said in his remarks that it was important to invest in young people. I agree with those remarks and I wonder if the member would care to explain that. I would quote former education minister Dave Johnson, May 4, 1999, where he said, "I ... assure the member opposite that over \$15 billion will be spent this year for all school" and education programming in this province.

Yet, when you look at the 2001 budget—I just happen to have it here—and listen to the comments of the current education minister, Janet Ecker, the province is spending \$13.8 billion. In two years, what happened to \$1.2 billion? Where did that money go? There's some fiction here that somehow the government is spending more on children and education, and it's a direct contradiction from one education minister to her predecessor. So I would ask the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford to account for \$1.2 billion.

I would also ask the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford to account for the fact that in the budgetary priorities of the current provincial government, when it comes to capital expenditure for our schools, we fund to the tune of \$16 million capital for the entire province of Ontario, yet a mere five years ago that was over \$500 million. Where did that money go?

I think the evidence shows, by their own budgetary document, education is short—I would say, when you adjust for inflation and enrolment growth a much greater amount—at least \$1.7 billion. I ask the member to account for that.

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford started off his remarks by saying he wanted to focus on accountability and proceeded to talk about several government programs and I want to focus on two of those. First, with respect to post-secondary education, it seems to me that the government has a responsibility to be accountable to ensure that kids who come from low- and middle-income families can actually have post-secondary education in this province. But under policies of this government, which have allowed tuition increases of 60%, too many of our young people will never have that opportunity because they can't afford to incur that kind of the debt at the end of their studies because they have no guarantee to get a job. Their families, low- and middle-income in particular, do not have the kinds of finances required to deal with those kinds of tuition costs and other ancillary costs. Where's the government's accountability?

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This is the government that deregulated programs: medical schools, engineering, any number of other programs. We see now that tuition alone for the first year of medical school at U of T this year was \$14,000. There aren't very many students from my part of the world who can afford that kind of tuition, never mind the cost of the ancillary services.

This is a government that essentially steals the federal money that comes through the millennium fund that was supposed to go to the students who were in the greatest amount of debt—

Hon David Turnbull (Solicitor General): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: That's not parliamentary at all.

The Acting Speaker: That's not a point of order.

Continue, member for Nickel Belt.

Ms Martel: It's a government that steals money that was directed to the students who have the greatest debt load. The government steals that because they take that

money and subsidize a program that the province has. That money doesn't go back into post-secondary education. Where's the government's accountability?

Finally, with respect to health care, I just point out the questions we've been raising on community care access centres. Ours has a \$1.8-million deficit; the government refuses to fund that. Where's the government's accountability to provide home care services for people who need them?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I would point out that I believe the member for Nickel Belt was accusing a member or in fact the minister of lying. I do believe that's out of order and I would like to make a point of order of that.

The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, I believe, focused on a very important part of Bill 45: the accountability mechanism.

I just want to go back to one point in the very limited time. To the member for London-Fanshawe, I want to commend that you're sitting in the chair and I want to put that on the record, because it really breaks all rules and traditions. You sit here every day, and basically I can hardly hear what you're saying. I want that on the record too. You're a good friend, but maybe it'll just show you the importance of respect and decorum in the House. I know my time is limited, otherwise you would rule me out of order.

On accountability, I would think that if you looked at Minister Flaherty's speech, you would say that people want a value-for-money audit process. They also want some public sector accountability. In fact, there's nothing negative about that. I can't wait for Erik Peters, our auditor, to go in and objectively look at measurable outcomes and make sure that every single taxpayer dollar is being spent appropriately and wisely and efficiently and make recommendations, as he was given to do, about where further investments arguably should be made. I look forward to that mechanism.

Today, when we've increased funding in health care by some 30% since 1995, I would have said, "I'll give you the cheque, but what am I getting for it?" Not that I'm accusing anyone in the system, but we've been flushing money through there like opening up some boom on a dam. I'm not sure exactly what I saw except—

The Acting Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The member's time has expired. Comments and questions? The Chair recognizes the member for Renfrew-Pembroke.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): I just want to say that I think the member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford makes a good point about accountability. I don't think—I hope there isn't a member in the Legislature or beyond who would take issue with the notion that governments in democratic societies have a right to show taxpayers that there is a reasonable and, hopefully, rigorous standard of accountability, particularly in financial administration, for the monies provided to governments by hard-working men and women. I think the rhetoric is entirely laudable.

The problem I have, not just today or yesterday, but quite frankly it's a problem I've had for some time, and

to be ecumenical about it, it certainly is a difficulty that we face in government: what about the practical reality? I think, for example, of a situation just a couple of years ago when it was clearly demonstrated that there was a serious dereliction of duties at the Ministry of Finance around the protection of confidential financial information at the Province of Ontario Savings Office. As far as I can tell, nothing was done. Nothing was done. That's just one example that I could cite.

As energy critic for the Liberal Party, I am involved with a number of other members in trying to make some sense out of the very complicated issues around electricity policy, and they're not easy. But I ask this Legislature on this account not to think about the behaviour of transfer partners, like the colleges and universities and school boards and hospitals, very important as they are. I ask us, as a collective assembly, do we really think we are exacting any kind of meaningful accountability on behalf of Her Majesty's taxpayers in Ontario for the multi-billion-dollar activities at Ontario Hydro and its successor companies? If you can answer that question in the positive, you are more optimistic than I am.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. And I'm sorry I missed the Nipissing part of your riding.

The member for Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford has two minutes.

Mr Tascona: I want to thank all the members for their comments: the members for Don Valley East, Nickel Belt, Durham, and Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

The last member's comments, which I think were echoed by the member for Nickel Belt also, in terms of accountability: certainly that's what taxpayers expect; that's what they demand. The point is well taken with respect to there being rigorous standards of accountability especially in financial administration; also to deal with that being a balanced budget, what's expected in terms of what money is given to them from the province, and to provide quality services and to deal with what the member says about practical realities. One thing the government has dealt with is those practical realities.

When you talk about what the member for Don Valley East was talking about, education funding, the bottom line, the practical reality in terms of the funding formula that the province has brought out with respect to education, where it's based on every student across the province getting the same amount of funding wherever they are for their education, is that obviously in my riding, which is a growth riding, it has benefited them significantly. But I think that's fairness in terms of how education funds are distributed.

The bottom line is that there's more money going into the classroom today than there ever has been in the history of this province—into the classroom. Classroom spending has increased significantly. That's where parents expect the money to go to benefit their children. So I'd say that the focus of this budget is obviously to keep the economy rolling in terms of sound fiscal management, balanced budgets that we have in paying down our debt, but also to put the money in place where it's needed in education and health care.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Conway: I'm pleased to rise tonight to address some remarks to the budget bill, Bill 45, standing in the name of the Minister of Finance. I want to restrict my comments tonight to two areas: first to health care and, second, to the budget provision providing income tax credits from the province of Ontario to the parents of children attending private schools.

Let me begin with some remarks about health care. The previous speaker has just indicated that the government of Ontario is spending more money this year in health care than it has in previous years. I don't want to get into a detailed discussion about that, except that I want to make this one point: few things that the Harris government has done have been more important in health care than a very radical restructuring of the hospital sector. As a result of that restructuring, something like 7,000 hospital beds have been taken out of the system in the last five or six years and substantial reconfigurations are occurring throughout much of the province with respect to the remaining hospital sector.

I simply want to make the point very quickly tonight that as I look across the capital costs of the Health Services Restructuring Commission's work, I am finding, two and three years after those directives were issued, that the cost overruns are anywhere between four and five and six times the original estimates. If one goes into communities, whether it be Sarnia, Brantford, Thunder Bay, Pembroke, Sudbury, Toronto or Ottawa, you will find that we're going to be spending hundreds of millions of dollars more than we had planned, because the original estimates were so woefully inaccurate.

So I say to my friend from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford, yes, we may be spending more money, but make no mistake about it: the original architecture for hospital restructuring was, we are now finding out, grossly wrong and inaccurate. If community X was expecting to spend \$30 million or \$40 million to reconfigure its hospitals, and now the reality is that the cost is \$150 million, I ask this Legislature, what have we done? I can tell you, and my friends on both sides of the aisle will know this, that in many of the affected communities we are dealing with increasingly incredulous taxpayers and constituents who want to know, how did this happen? More money? Yes. But in my community, for example, hospital restructuring that was supposed to cost something in the neighbourhood of \$5 million is going to cost \$25 million, minimum. Those are real dollars. I'm not here to cast blame; I'm here to report that reality. More money? Yes. But against what kind of original projection, with what kind of unintended consequence? And dare I raise the word of the hour, "accountability"? If I were asking today, "From whom do I exact the accountability for a commitment that turns out to have been understated by tens of millions, hundreds of millions of dollars?"—where do I go? To whom do I say, "Are you responsible?" If so, to what end and with what effect? Tough, hard questions in a democratic society. More money? Yes. But we have an obligation, surely, to ask ourselves, where is it going?

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Today, most of us across the province are as MPPs being besieged with phone calls to our constituency offices from families of individuals, frail elderly in the main, who are wondering what on earth is happening; if more money is being spent by the Dominion and the Ontario governments for health care, what explains the fact that very important home care and homemaking services are being taken away? I spoke today to the family of an 84-year-old woman in my constituency. This woman is 84, she has Alzheimer's, she's got a broken hip and she's being sustained in her own home in a small community in the Ottawa Valley, and the family is pitching in to a very real and great extent. I am simply saying to the Legislature that I've spoken to the family, I've spoken to the providers, and they are asking me what is going on. We have, as a provincial government, supported the community care access centre over the last number of years to help these individuals be sustained with a good quality of life and a good quality of care in their home setting. They read the Ottawa and Pembroke and Renfrew papers and see governments spending more money, and they don't understand how an 84-year-old woman with Alzheimer's and a broken hip is going to be substantially reduced in the level of homemaking and home support.

There's a letter in today's Renfrew Mercury talking about a daughter in Kanata who is talking about her elderly mother living in my constituency, who has had and who requires certain kinds of homemaking supports to be kept where she wants to be, in her own home. Now she's being told and the family is being told, "It's got to go. You're going to have to make alternate arrangements." I say to this Legislature, after we as a government and as a Legislature said, "We are going to reduce the hospital sector. We are going to deinstitutionalize because we can do a better job in many of these areas by providing home and community-based care," we are now breaking faith with that commitment and the tens of thousands of frail elderly who expect us to keep faith with that kind of a commitment.

One of my community newspapers, the Renfrew Mercury, of yesterday editorializes, "Seniors short-changed by community care access centre changes." I'm not going to read the whole editorial, but it is a very critical editorial as to these cutbacks that are occurring at all of these CCACs, including the Renfrew county community care access centre. The letters have gone out; it's very clear. According to the Renfrew county community care access centre, they are saying that because of government funding cuts, they, the Renfrew county community care access centre, are going to have to, for budgetary constraint purposes, reduce—and reduce significantly—the level of home care and home support services to the hundreds, potentially thousands, of constituents in my area who depend on those services.

The Renfrew Mercury editorial implores my constituents—let me just quote from the last line of the Renfrew Mercury editorial, May 29, 2001: "Pick up your pens and

bullhorns and let Queen's Park know that the way it is treating Renfrew county's seniors is unacceptable." I dare say that if I go to Listowel or Petrolia or Goderich or Nickel Belt, I'm going to find an awful lot of community opinion that's going to support that editorial position.

Make no mistake about it: where are these people going to go? These frail elderly, many of whom are very, very vulnerable, are almost certainly, without these community and home supports, going to be back in the institutional setting. Is that what we want? That's not the program we advertised. I'm not making this up. I am imagining, because I've been talking to these people in the last two or three days, that families, good people, many of them good supporters of the current government, are absolutely beside themselves trying to understand, how is it possible, with what they've read in the newspapers about increased government funding, that this is happening? That's a good question. If you read the material that's being provided to families from the community care access centres, as a number of honourable members have made plain in question period exchanges over the last few days, the reason seems clear: the Ontario government is not providing the same level of funding for many of these community care access centres that they've had before and that they feel, given the burgeoning caseload, they're going to require if they're going to adequately meet this health care challenge in their community.

I want to just cite something that my colleague Mrs McLeod mentioned earlier this afternoon. She was at a meeting with a number of people associated with this policy area, and she said something to me that I thought was very interesting. According to a number of people closely associated with home care and community-based care, there are a goodly number of community care access centres which are spending up to 70% of their total budget on acute care for people just discharged from hospitals—70% of the entire budget of a goodly number of these community care access centres being spent on people who are just out of hospital. Is it any wonder, then, that there is less and less money for the frail elderly, who may require home and community supports? Seventy per cent of the budget going to provide acute care services for people just discharged from hospitals.

My colleagues on both sides of the aisle talk about privatization and what it might mean in health care. I submit to this House that what is going on in Renfrew county and elsewhere with respect to the underfunding of community care access centres for the good and important work that they must provide to the frail elderly with respect to home support and homemaking represents the most vicious kind of privatization imaginable, and we should, as a collective, demand a change of policy. Privatization of a truly upsetting kind—I can't imagine anything worse than this. I've spoken as recently as late this afternoon with families who have been given about 72 hours' notice. "What are we going to do? My mother is 84. She's got Alzheimer's. She's had a broken hip. What do we do? We as a family are there for many, many

hours a day, but we cannot be there 24 hours a day.” They’re simply told, “Make other arrangements, and make them fast.”

I say on behalf of the frail elderly and the thousands of family members that I represent who are at this moment deeply troubled, let this government, with the support of the Legislature, address this issue, because if we don’t address it soon and directly—and yes, there may very well be some additional costs. I say to you, Mr Speaker, and this Legislature, make no mistake about what the most significant expenditure item is in this 2001 Ontario provincial budget. It is, fully matured, a \$2.2-billion corporate tax cut. If we can find \$2.2 billion over the next few years to reduce the corporate tax rate in Ontario, lower than any other Canadian province or, I understand, virtually any other American state, then surely we can find adequate resources to properly and humanely provide for the frail elderly in Renfrew county and every other county and city and territory in this province in a way that we promised to do when we embarked upon deinstitutionalization years ago.

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A second observation I want to make tonight concerns another important provision of Bill 45, the so-called provincial tax credit for private schools. I understand that this is a deeply difficult issue for probably all of us. I have been listening over the last number of days to a number of my good friends on the treasury bench saying to me, “Well, Conway, what are your opinions?”

I’m going to take a moment tonight to express them. They’re going to fall into two categories. The first, which are really of secondary importance, are what I would call the process or procedural ones. Far more important are my substantive concerns. Let me be clear: I am deeply opposed to this initiative, notwithstanding the good and important work that I understand private schools do in Ontario. I’ve got private schools in my own constituency. I have visited those schools. I understand the good work they do and the commitment that those families and organizations have to support those private schools.

But I want to say, has the political class learned nothing from the experiences of the 1980s and 1990s? I say to you, Mr Speaker, and every member in this House, that if we as individuals or members of political parties intend to make this kind of significant change in public policy, affecting something so basic to our community as the public schools, we are duty bound, we are honour bound, to say before a general election that this is our policy. I don’t mean just for the government; this equally applies to the opposition parties.

That we would imagine today a government led by my neighbour from Nipissing announcing in this 2001 budget a policy to provide tax credits to the parents of kids going to private schools when Mr Harris so plainly indicated that that was not his policy, when his minister so clearly indicated that that was not her policy—how dare we? How dare we in this democratic age, in this age of the charter, when we have lived through what we lived through with the Meech Lake accord and, yes, the

separate school extension of 1984 and all that came with that?

I say to this Legislature, if the Premier didn’t learn anything from the 1980s, I certainly did. If any member of this Legislature, individually or collectively, wants to do this, then I say, you stand up before your electorate and tell them that that is your intention. To say that this is not your policy and then, after winning election on those grounds, to say, “My policy has changed,” is another breach of faith and an insult to accountability in a democratic society.

It is no secret, it is absolutely no secret, that my friend Monte Kwinter from the beginning has said he believes there should be support for the Jewish schools. He has been consistent since the day he was elected, and I respect that. I respect it indeed. I am a product of the Roman Catholic separate schools, and some would say, “Well, you ought to talk,” and I will talk, for two reasons.

This is a walk I have walked. I have walked this walk in a way that has taught me some important lessons. It was my obligation to be the minister to give effect to the promise Bill Davis made that fateful day in June 1984. It was a policy that my party and the New Democratic Party had espoused for years. The dramatic reversal in 1984 came from Mr Davis, a man for whom I have a great respect but with whom I differed on a number of occasions. I want this House to understand that when that bill of mine, Bill 30, the Peterson government separate school act, supported by virtually everyone here, with, quite frankly, due regard to my friend Norm Sterling, who was opposed—it was taken to the Supreme Court of Canada, and that highest court said in June 1987 that this was a duty that the Ontario government had had for lo many decades to complete the Confederation bargain. The Supreme Court, in a unanimous verdict, seven to nothing, said that the government of Ontario was obligated to do this to keep faith with the arrangements made in the middle of the 19th century.

I simply want to say that, on substantive grounds, Ontario in 2001 is a province that is increasingly multi-faith and multicultural. The Ontario Ministry of Finance last summer published demographic projections for the next 25 years, and I ask honourable members, when they look at the budget documents from finance, to look at these demographic projections.

Let me summarize very briefly: in the next 25 to 30 years, we are told by finance, this province will grow by nearly 3.8 million people. Of that 3.8 million, 75% of that growth is going to come from immigration, and most of that immigration is apparently going to come from South Asia and Latin and South America. Seventy-five per cent of 3.8 million new Ontarians are going to come to us happily through immigration.

We all know the central role that public schools have to integrate this wonderful group of men and women from across the globe. I think Ontarians, of whatever political stripe, have in the main done a very good job in trying over the decades to integrate and balance. It’s not been perfect and there have been very controversial

flashpoints, but I beg this Legislature to think seriously against the backdrop of these demographic projections about what we will do if this incentive to fracture the public schools is supported. We are looking for the next 25 and 30 years at a dramatically different kind of Ontario than I knew when I was growing up in the Ottawa Valley in the 1940s and 1950s. Let me say, as someone who was Minister of Education, \$300 million projection? If you believe that, you believe in the tooth fairy. This is going to be a much more costly undertaking than you can imagine, and I'm not even going to talk about the capital implications of this.

However well-intentioned was the instinct, I say to you, Mr Flaherty, your tax credit for private schools is wrong policy. It is potentially destructive policy. It will be damaging to people who imagine it to be a benefit and, most importantly, it will be a very serious and painful fracture for the public schools on which foundation we must stand proudly if we are going to integrate these 2.5 million to 3 million new Canadians.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

Ms Martel: I enjoyed listening to the comments made by the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. I especially appreciated him providing the historical and legal context for the full funding of Catholic schools, because I am a product of the Catholic school system as well. Our family paid for grades 11, 12 and 13 when I attended Catholic school because funding hadn't been extended.

But the legal context for that extension of funding is completely different from what the government proposes to do today. I appreciate that my colleague from the Liberal Party made that clear. The government has no obligation, as it did in the period 1974 to 1987, to use public money to support the private school system. I have heard, when we have asked questions to the government about this, some members in the back talking about the Catholic system. There is a very clear distinction between what the government was obliged to do by law because of the constitutional right that Catholics had in that case and what this government proposes to do today, and I too am very concerned about how divisive this road will be that the government wants to take us down.

Secondly, I want to reinforce what the member said with respect to health care funding. In our community we are getting hit twice as well. We are a community that has had a forced restructuring of our hospital system to go from three hospitals down to one. We had an original cost estimate for the new hospital of \$143 million. It's up to \$206 million. We had an original estimate from the Health Services Restructuring Commission for \$9 million worth of equipment for the new hospital. The real equipment needs are now up to \$74 million. Our community is facing a serious financial crisis with respect to paying for this hospital restructuring that has been forced on us. This government refuses to recognize that crisis and instead will force our community somehow to try and fund that too.

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Mr Frank Mazzilli (London-Fanshawe): It's certainly my pleasure to respond to the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

Let me just start by saying that in this budget we recognize and are committed to publicly funded education to the tune of over \$13 billion. If we cannot provide public education in this province for \$13.8 billion, I suspect at some point we have a very big difficulty. So I believe that demand has been met with an increase of \$360 million in this last budget.

When we hear the opposition complain that a tax credit is somehow going to bring down a fully funded public school education system that's funded to the tune of \$13.8 billion, that certainly causes me some concern. What was in the budget was a small tax credit of 10% in the first year, 20% in the second year, as we heard from the finance minister today. The opposition somehow wants to disregard that.

Many religious schools, and there are some in my riding, have family caps of \$4,000 to \$5,000—as many kids as you can send to that school from one family capped under one amount, and some may charge \$2,000. We are not talking about rich people here. The opposition continually wants to talk about Upper Canada College, where the fees are \$22,000 and \$23,000. You know why? They love to farmonger. A \$7,000 maximum tuition with a maximum of \$3,500, 50%, after five years will not in any way, shape or form take money out of public education. So I ask Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals to stop the farmongering.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): It's always interesting to listen to the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

This tax credit for the private schools is a step backwards for our education system. Also, the \$2.2 billion that will be awarded to the corporations—let me tell you, with this \$2.2 billion we could have got MRI equipment at the Hawkesbury hospital, at the Montfort Hospital, at the Cornwall hospital, at the Glengarry hospital. We could have got a lot more of that MRI equipment. In Ottawa at the present time we have a waiting list of over 7,000 people.

Let me tell you, lately the health care system has been getting a blow. When I say a blow, I've got this gentleman, Stéphane Wathier from Rockland. Last week his back seized up. He went to the doctor at the hospital. The doctor said, "No way I could see that on the X-ray. You have to go for an MRI." The only place he could go is over to the Hull side because they have the Ottawa Valley MRI, but it's going to cost him \$775. He goes back to the Civic Hospital and Dr Boulanger over there looked at the X-ray. Even though the nurse said, "We have no money at the present time to proceed with the urgent operation," the doctor said, "I have to operate on him immediately." He got the operation on that same day; otherwise this guy could have been paralyzed for the rest of his life. Another member in the same room is still waiting for an MRI, just to show you.

Also, the gentleman that I spoke about yesterday, Marc Pilon from Plantagenet: at the present time he was under assistance at the Gamma lab at the Ottawa Hospital. No way he could continue. It is going to cost him \$480 a week now for physiotherapy.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): It's a pleasure to be able to respond to the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. It was interesting that this particular member zeroed in on bed closures that our government may have made. I don't remember that many bed closures on the part of our government, but I know that close to 10,000 beds were closed during that lost decade and I know that the NDP was pretty upset back in the late 1980s when the Liberal government was closing a large number of beds.

It was interesting to hear the member talk about the overruns of hospitals. I'd like him to know that the new hospital in west Northumberland with the Northumberland Health Care Corp is coming in on target, on budget and on time. So maybe he can add that to his roll and talk about hospitals and where they're coming in. But he should also be aware that the costs for those hospitals are coming from SuperBuild, not from the operational dollars we're putting in, like the \$1.2-billion increase we're putting in this year and the \$6-billion increase we've put in since we took office back in 1995.

I'd like to ask him how many hospitals and how many long-term-care beds were built during their watch? I understand there were no long-term-care beds built during their watch, but I wonder how many hospitals were built during his watch. Maybe he can tell us. I'd like to know when he goes to Ottawa and back to his home riding how often he talks to his federal Liberal cousins about their funding of health care. Maybe, just maybe, he and Allan Rock could consider getting the federal transfer payments up to the level they were when Brian Mulroney left office. That would be a tremendous assistance to Ontario, if we got back to an 18% transfer payment.

Interjections.

Mr Galt: I know it's kind of an insult to you to throw that one out, but would it ever help health care here in Ontario if we got back to 18% transfer payments.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr Conway: I want to address the comments of the member from London-Fanshawe, because he made some lively responses to my remarks, particularly about the education issue. I want to say to the member from London-Fanshawe and to the House generally that if it is his intention and if it is the intention of any party to support private schools, through this mechanism or any other, I say to him and to the group that we are honour-bound to say to the general electorate before the votes are cast, "This is our policy. On this rock I will stand and on this measure I will be judged."

I just can't believe that the political class in 2001 thinks it can get away with this. Who the hell do we think we are? Have we learned nothing from the last 20 years? We've just heard a paean of praise from our friend

Tascona about accountability. I've heard lecture after lecture about participatory democracy, about the need for referenda. And we do what with something as vital and as central as the public schools? Knowing that the Minister of Education has one set of views, written about just weeks or months ago, and knowing what my friend the member from Nipissing has said on the platform and in correspondence, we get what? We get this budget, that represents a dramatic change of government policy without notice, without consultation.

Who do we think we are? If you want to do this, I say to my friend from Fanshawe and anybody else on either side of this House, stand individually and stand collectively before the general electorate and say, "Elect me and I will do this." Get a sanction for what it is you want to do. Don't try to do at night through the back door what you would not dare do at high noon through the front door.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Galt: I appreciate the opportunity to speak on Bill 45, a budget bill and a bill about responsible choices. The responsible choices the Minister of Finance and our Premier made in that budget were certainly very tough choices. I'd like to compliment the Minister of Finance for just an excellent budget that he brought in for the year 2001-02 and also Premier Mike Harris, who similarly had a lot of input into this particular budget. I think this is one of the better budgets we've seen during our first two years in office. I'm particularly impressed with this. I know the tough choices being made by the Premier and by the Minister of Finance were with the best of intentions for the residents of Ontario.

Just looking at a few of these, one is debt reduction. We know that debt reduction in Ontario is going to ensure stability and economic security for this province. That has become a hallmark of this government. Right from 1995, it has been getting the budget balanced so dollars could be there for the important social programs we've grown to enjoy in this province. But we also have to reduce the debt; getting the debt down certainly leaves more dollars for those particular programs.

It was also good to see in the budget the commitment, the sincere commitment, to health care in Ontario and also to education standards. Certainly in both cases the dollars have increased.

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Another area, that I'd like to speak a little more about later on, is around disabled people. The disabled persons we have in the province are being recognized in this budget, and those are the people who help to enrich our society here in Ontario. That's one area I lobbied very hard with the Minister of Finance to recognize.

For a few minutes I'd like to speak on the tax cuts and on debt reduction, all very responsible choices taken by the Minister of Finance. We're committed to that reduction of 20% in personal income tax. That indeed was part of the Blueprint, the platform we ran on back in 1999. There's no question that tax reduction and tax cuts in this province have left more dollars in people's

pockets and more people are spending. The end result has been more tax revenue for Ontario.

It's interesting to note that the current tax cut will mean some \$4 billion more in the pockets of the people of Ontario; \$4 billion to buy widgets, to buy goods, to buy services. When they purchase those, of course the services and goods have to be supplied by somebody, and those are the people who are being hired. The end result has been, since we took office in 1995, a net increase in jobs in Ontario of some 846,000. A lot of people chuckled back in 1995 when we had a commitment of some 725,000 over the first five years. Well, we've broken that, have gone well over it—almost another 125,000 jobs—on our way to our next commitment.

Another very interesting area that you may have noticed in the budget and what's been going on is that some 735,000 people do not pay provincial income tax but do have to pay federal income tax. These are low-income families. It's a crying shame that the Liberals in Ottawa would continue to drain these families with low incomes, that they would drain them by continuing to charge them income tax. We're leading the way. This government, one I'm very proud to be part of, is leading the way with tax cuts. Tax cuts were Mike Harris's idea right from the beginning. Even back in the campaign of 1990 he was known as the Taxfighter. What's happening now? Right across Canada, Liberal governments, socialist governments, all of them are cutting taxes, following the lead of the province of Ontario.

Another aspect of this particular budget that I was excited about was to see the debt reduction. When we came into office in the second term, we were talking about a debt reduction goal, hopefully, of some \$5 billion. The first year we cut it by \$1 billion, and that looked very good. We were on track, but in this budget it's some \$3 billion, which is 80% already of the goal we had in mind, and that in spite of what appears to be slight recessionary times, a little hiccup in the economy, certainly not nearly as severe in Ontario as the rest of Canada and not nearly as severe as what's going on in the US.

So I don't think there's any question that the province of Ontario is indeed on the right track. If you check some of the polls, there's no question that people recognize what's going on in Ontario currently.

In connection with the responsible choices from our budget, as I look at something like health care, we're ensuring that quality will indeed be there. As I mentioned a few minutes ago, the budget for health care since 1995 has increased from the \$17.4 billion at that time; we've increased it by over \$6 billion, and this year it's going up by a \$1.2-billion estimate. That will amount to a 5.4% increase, significantly more than inflation.

But what is interesting that's happening is that in health care, 45 cents, or 45%, of the programmable dollar is going to health care. That was at some 38%, or 38 cents on the dollar, when we took office back in 1995. So you can see where it's evolving.

It's been said before, but I'll say it again: funding alone to the health care system is not the answer. There

has to be a better answer than simply pouring more dollars into it. Certainly there's more accountability needed. I have had physicians come to me and say there is indeed wastage in the system, particularly in the hospitals, and it's time that some accountability was brought to them.

I'd like to read a quote to you. This is from Joan Ross, who is the CEO of the Northumberland Health Care Corp: "We do have to look at reforming the health care system. We seem to be spending more, but we're not seeing the results." I think her quote could be said by many CEOs of hospitals that are doing a particularly good job. I'm particularly impressed with what that hospital and that board are accomplishing.

Also in responsible choices is education. In this budget is a \$360-million increase for education, \$360 million being put into the budget. We hear the opposition say, "That's not enough," but they never seem to say how much is enough. They always want more, but I guess that's typical Liberal rhetoric. Also in the budget, to recognize that double cohort going through our colleges and universities, is some \$293 million committed for the year 2003-04 to let those institutions know where they're at down the road so that they can indeed plan, and also recognizing the Ontario Institute of Technology at Durham College.

It's interesting. We listened to the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke, I believe, make the comments earlier about concern over the tax credit that's being given or being recognized for those who want to send their young people, their students, to an independent school. Now, we've heard the Liberals talk about choice in education, something which I have promoted for a very, very long time. Yes, maybe we should be paying the transportation to assist getting students to their local school, but they should have the option to go to any school where there's space in the province of Ontario—not that they can move around every week or every two weeks, but on an annual or semi-annual basis. I was hearing the Liberals talking about this choice in where they would attend school, so this is indeed another choice. I can assure you that each and every one of these families—an awful lot of them with moderate incomes—sending their students to a religious or cultural school have to dig pretty deep to pay for this education. They're not all going to upper class, so-called private schools. I see this as another choice. I see those parents already paying their full share for the public education system, and this is some recognition to assist them.

If I may, another quote from a constituent of mine, John Melbourn. He writes, "Despite what certain groups are saying, the vast majority of people who support an independent school are not to be counted among the wealthy or the elite. We are honest, hard-working citizens of Ontario who will continue to pay taxes toward the public system and are glad to get a little breathing space in regards to what we pay toward the schooling of our children." I think that is very, very well said. It certainly sums up the concerns that I've had for them,

and I made a commitment back in 1995, when I met with a group of these parents, that I would work and lobby as best I could to ensure this end. I was pleasantly surprised it was in this budget and very, very pleased to be able to report to those parents that maybe my lobbying indeed has been successful, but certainly I know many others have lobbied as well. This is going to really be helping a lot of these parents who are very committed to having an option as to where their children are educated.

This budget of responsible choices is also zeroing in on quality of life for some of those who have some difficulties; it's really quality of life for everyone. We are committed to some \$55 million this year, to be invested in the developmental disabilities area—certainly those adults. That's to grow to some \$197 million in a few years.

The area I have a lot of concerns about and lobbied the Minister of Finance about, expressing my concerns, was adult handicapped children with aging parents. I was having about one a month come to my office, expressing concerns. They had had a stroke or a heart attack or whatever and didn't feel they were able any longer to look after one of these adult children who may have been 35 or 40 years of age. They were very worried as to what was going to happen, as to what would become of them. I was particularly pleased to see in the budget, I believe it was some \$69 million, set aside to construct spaces for these adult people with developmental handicaps. I'm pleased to see that has come, and also to see the recognizing of improved construction for more facilities to provide safety for abused women and children, and also for youth organizations.

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It's also refreshing and great to see our government working very closely with the children's aid society and with children's treatment centres. These are our young people, and it's great to see that children have been the priority for our Premier: helping with the very early years of our young people, with a tremendous number of dollars from this government being zeroed into that area. Ontario's Promise is a program that is going over extremely well.

Another area of responsible choice was in connection with the traffic problem. They are now committed to extend Highway 407 all the way out to Highway 35-115. That is going to be a tremendous boost to the economy of eastern Ontario, particularly for counties like Northumberland, Victoria and Peterborough. They are running into a real gridlock on the 401 as you go through Pickering and Ajax out to Oshawa. Hopefully, and I expect, this extension, which will be in place in a few years, will help that tremendously. It was certainly good news for us.

I think about the gridlock we now have, particularly around Toronto. Back in 1995, when I was first commuting to Toronto on a regular basis, I didn't have to worry what time of day I was driving to Toronto. I could come at almost any time and there was no stop-and-go traffic. I guess, when you create 845,000 net new jobs, those people will be going to work, a fair number of them

in Toronto. They're also buying goods, and other people with tax cuts are buying goods, and transports are on the road delivering those goods. It shouldn't be too surprising we're now having some traffic flow problems in and around Toronto. Granted, some of those highways are actually owned by the municipality, and they have a responsibility, as well as the province, but it's kind of refreshing to see that the gridlock problem we have is one that has been created because of such a stimulus of the economy in this province. It's kind of like a back-handed compliment almost.

Our Premier with his leadership and our Minister of Transportation are looking at similar plans to extending the 407 east; they're looking at similar plans around Toronto and Ottawa, and at similar plans in the Niagara Peninsula. The opposition, the NDP, when they were in government, came out with the idea of having private industry build some of these highways, but when we took office, lo and behold, I found out it really hadn't been taken over by a private consortium. I was actually quite disappointed to find that out.

For those who need to get around Toronto quickly, it's an ideal highway to use for the people in the east, because they want to be assured of getting to the airport on time. It's an excellent highway to step up to. You're pretty well assured there won't be any traffic jams, any traffic problems. You can breeze along that particular section of highway and end up at the airport with some assurance you will be there in time for your flight.

All in all, as I look at some of the industries, whether they're in Kingston, Belleville, Cobourg, Port Hope, Campbellford or Brighton, and they need to get a truck-load of goods delivered to some city west of Toronto, they can now use, or will be able to use the 115, once this extension is out to the 115, and have some assurance that they will indeed be at their destination at the point in time they've planned.

This has been an excellent budget, coming in to be of assistance to the people of Ontario. It's a budget that again recognizes the importance of tax cuts for the people of Ontario. Tax cuts: we're leading right across this whole nation. A lot of other people outside of Ontario, outside of Canada, are looking at what we've accomplished. The American government and a lot of the American states are starting to step up their tax cuts. It's really going to increase the competition, and we're going to have to relook at what we've been doing here in Ontario with tax cuts, and possibly have to look at more to meet that kind of competition.

It's also interesting to note and look at the gross domestic product that's been coming from this province for quite a few years now. We've been not only leading all the other provinces, but we've been leading all of the G7, and I guess now it's the G8, countries. They're in the developed world. That, I believe, is a record if you look at what was going on prior to our taking office. We brag about the almost 850,000 net new jobs. I believe it was something like 20,000 net jobs that we actually lost in the first five years of the 1990s—that was unfortunate—and

umpteen people were leaving this country, going to other states, going to New Brunswick. There was kind of a standard joke around Ontario that if you want to start a small business, all you have to do is buy a large business and just wait. That is exactly what was going on back in the early 1990s, when the NDP were in government.

I believe Ontario is on the right track. With the blueprint laid out in Minister Flaherty's budget, the province is set to engage in a plan of action based on a series of responsible choices, choices which will include accountability for decisions made and the courage to introduce that change. It includes tax cuts and fiscal responsibility, while at the same time honouring previous commitments to funding for health, education and social programs.

I fully support Bill 45 for its fair representation of this government's efforts to represent the people of Ontario, and I certainly encourage all the members in opposition to seriously look at this bill, because I think if they really look at it in detail, they'll be able to support it. I look forward to the speedy passage of Bill 45.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Mazzilli: Listening to the member for Northumberland, he certainly explained this budget well. This budget has been consistent with all the budgets since 1995 in continuing to reduce taxes. The one thing we know is that reduction of taxes is proportionate to the increased revenues of government. That has been well documented since 1995. Every time we reduced taxes in any way, shape or form, government revenues actually increased.

This is something that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals just do not understand. If we look at 20 or 25 years of history, every time you increase taxes, government revenues actually go down. There are all kinds of variables for that; we understand that. If we start from that basic concept that every time we make tax reductions, government revenues go up, we certainly have more money, not less, as we hear from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals, to provide the programs we all very much need and want in our communities.

Those programs are increased funding for health care. There's been an increase in the provincial portion of health care funding by \$6 billion since the Mike Harris government was elected in 1995. I know that Mike Harris cares about health care, cares about the people in this province.

There have been increases to publicly funded education, to the tune now of public education in this province being funded at \$13.8 billion. If that is not a commitment to public education, I don't know what is. But do you know what Dalton McGuinty and his Liberal friends want to do? They want to fearmonger on a small tax credit for religious schools.

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The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

The member for Northumberland has two minutes to respond.

Mr Galt: I appreciate the comments made by the member from London-Fanshawe. He reiterated this in-

crease in government revenues when there's been a tax cut, and that's certainly something that we've recognized and that has happened over and over again with each one of the tax cuts that has occurred in this province.

It was interesting back in 1995: looking over the first five years of the 1990s and seeing each tax increase that the NDP brought in, they thought there would be more revenue for their social programs, but with each increase you could see an actual drop in the graph of revenue. They dropped very, very significantly in their revenues. So not only is there proof that as you cut taxes the revenue goes up, but when you increase taxes often the revenue goes down. It all has to do with economics and elasticity of supply and demand, and it gets very complicated. I did have an economist explain to me the Laffer curve. We had reached a point when this really does happen. When you first start out on the Laffer curve, that's the beginning of low taxes, and yes, as you increase taxes, you do get more revenue. But when you get up to a certain point it goes into reverse, and that's the point we had actually reached.

It was interesting, the member for London-Fanshawe making some comments about our commitment and the commitment of Mike Harris to health and education. That's certainly a commitment we had going right back to our first platform, the Common Sense Revolution. You'll remember that; it came out in the spring of 1994, a full year ahead of an election, something that no other party had ever done in the past. And we did commit very deeply to health care and to education at that time, a promise that we have kept.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I'll be sharing my time this evening with the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London. I'm happy to have some time to participate in this debate. I am going to focus my remarks almost exclusively on my greatest concern in this budget, besides the \$2.2 billion that is going to be given to corporations and that could be much more effectively used to protect public services. I want to focus on my major concern with the direct attack on public service, which is the education tax credit given to those who want to put their children into private schools.

I had an opportunity to speak yesterday on the resolution of our leader, Dalton McGuinty, calling for that tax credit to be withdrawn. I had the opportunity to speak about how heartsick it makes me to see where this tax credit is going to take our public education system, to see the kind of fragmentation and segregation that it's going to introduce, to know that this kind of tax credit will lead inevitably to two-tiered education, where the best education is reserved for those who can afford to pay for more than public education is able to deliver. How heartsick I felt about the loss of 150 years of commitment to providing a universally accessible quality public education system.

I touched very quickly yesterday on how angry I was as well, and it's the anger that I want to return to in my time this evening, my anger at how deliberately this

government has prepared the way for the dissolution of public education: strangled, starved public education to the point where they hope there will be a receptiveness on the part of people who don't feel the public education system can provide quality any longer and who are going to be more than willing to accept the government's financial incentive to withdraw their children from the public system.

It makes me angry because I look back to the beginning of this agenda, this attack on public education by the Harris government, and I remember John Snobelen, the former Minister of Education, when he made the famous—or infamous—“create a crisis” speech, where he said that you've got to create a crisis in order to pave the way for transformational change. Mr Snobelen said, and he believed, as I believe so many of his colleagues believe, that you've got to create a clean slate so that there will be no resistance at all to bringing in your own agenda.

There were some concerns even back then that the kind of transformational change that the then Minister of Education was talking about was really charter schools, private schools funded with public funds, that really what they wanted to do was to change the very nature of universally accessible quality public education in which every child has an opportunity for equality of education. Mr Snobelen, then Minister of Education, realized that the public was not sympathetic to direct attacks on public education, that they were not prepared to see their government move public funding into chartered schools, into private schools, that they wanted support for the public education system that we've tried to build in this province for 150 years. So Mr Snobelen read the political winds and backed off a little bit, and his government said, “We'll just have to come at this agenda in a somewhat different way.”

But they still needed an immediate \$1 billion out of education, so in order to prepare the public for the taking out, the stripping out, of \$1 billion from public education, the beginnings of the erosion of the quality of the public education system, they started their attacks. They started their attacks on trustees. They said, “You can't, after all, trust these people with public education.” They said, “Trustees have been raising class sizes. What do they know about protecting quality of education?” The fact that that was not true was incidental to the public relations campaign, which had its goal of discrediting public school trustees.

They discredited teachers. You couldn't trust teachers either. And not only that, teachers were ripping off the system. They were lazy. They weren't working as much as teachers in the rest of the country, at least according to the infamous clock ads, which this government spent several million dollars of public money on in order to disseminate this message about how teachers could not be trusted to be concerned about the quality of public education.

The agenda was deliberate. It was an agenda of attempting to discredit the people who were responsible,

who were entrusted with the delivery of public education, to discredit them so that they could pave the way for the next step in their agenda, and of course the next step in their agenda was Bill 160: taking total control of the funding of education so they could indeed find their \$1 billion. And when the current Minister of Education says to us, “You did not support Bill 160,” she is right. We fought Bill 160 with everything that we had in us, and we couldn't stop it any more, I'm afraid, than we may be able to stop the government from taking this next step, the final blow to public education.

Bill 160, which gave the government total control over educational funding, made them the managers of our schools for all intents and purposes, left a nominal, no-win role for school trustees, led then to funding formulas that cut funding by raising class sizes. The Minister of Education said we didn't support Bill 160 in having maximum class sizes. There were no maximum class sizes in 160. Bill 160 set an unacceptable average class size of 25 students in an elementary school class, where we had 18 and 19 and 20 students in junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten, and the only way school boards can have reasonable class sizes in those junior grades now is to have higher class sizes in grades 4 to 8. When this Minister of Education says that they have set maximum class sizes, I ask her to go back and look at the reality of what the public education system was like before this government got hold of it.

I'm going to run out of time to go through the history of what this government did to special education, leaving 35,000 students on a waiting list. They say they increased special-education funding; they neglected the fact that they took unto themselves the tax dollars that the city of Toronto and the city of Ottawa were putting into special education, 100% of their own funding in order to provide special-education needs. And now they leave 35,000 students on a waiting list for special education.

They stripped the budgets for textbooks and for equipment. I met with the teachers in Sir Winston Churchill high school in my riding. Do you know that this government, with its new tests and its new curriculum, requires something called graphic calculators? Do you know that that Sir Winston Churchill high school cannot provide graphic calculators for their grade 10 students. I don't know how the grade 10 students are ever going to pass the grade 10 math exam, because they don't have enough money to give them the equipment they need to even learn what's required.

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I think of my grandson starting junior kindergarten this year. Do you know what was the first thing he did? He brought home the chocolate bars that he had to sell—a five-year-old in junior kindergarten—because that was the only way they could get the supplies they needed for the junior kindergarten. So don't let this government say they have done anything to improve the quality of public education, because they have been systematically dismantling it and squeezing it and starving it. They have created cuts. They've brought in cuts, they've created

chaos, they have constantly attacked the people who provide public education. They claim that this was about quality, but we have said all along that you can't provide a quality of education when you attack and devalue the work of the very people who are entrusted with providing that education to our children.

So this budget bill now shows just how phony their so-called support for public education has always been. We know now what the transformational change is that Mr Snobelen and his government and the people who were urging him to move forward on this agenda so many years ago, we know now what it is, and it is indeed transforming the public education system into a truly two-tiered, segregated, fragmented educational system.

This government has been very clever. They have found a way to achieve two agendas at once. They've given people a financial incentive to withdraw their children from the public school system. In return for that, they make money. They save more money than they've already cut. They only have to pay those people at the end of the four years, whatever the Minister of Finance said it is, before it costs the full \$300 million or \$500 million or \$700 million that it will cost. They only have to pay those people, give them a tax credit of \$3,500. But they save \$7,000 for every student that is withdrawn from the public school system. So they save their dollars and they still get to move forward on their privatization agenda.

I see this agenda happening in public education. I wanted to trace its history. And I'm going to have an opportunity, when we get to Bill 46, to show how they are doing exactly the same thing to our public hospitals. I will outline how they have started the attack on those entrusted with providing public health care in our hospital system in order to move to their agenda of privatization of our hospitals.

But I want to conclude my remarks this evening with quoting something that I quoted in a speech back in 1996-97. It's Erika Shaker, who is with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, whom I was quoting. She said, "The language of democracy—choice; freedom; diversity—has been hijacked [by the advocates of the radical right] to reflect an agenda that requires rigidity, exclusivity and elitism under the guise of making the system more 'accountable' to the 'tax-paying public.'" For destroying the universal public education system that Egerton Ryerson envisaged 150 years ago, shame on this government for leaving such a shameful legacy.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I think it's incumbent on myself as critic responsible for agriculture to point out to the rural communities and to the farmers of this province how, once again, this government has neglected the agricultural community and, once again, agriculture has been left out in the cold by this government.

The government announces that they've reinvested \$40 million more into agriculture, but that's a fallacy, because it's little more than recycled, reannounced and unspent monies from a previous budget, from previous

ministry programs. This is not new money as the government leads us to believe. This money comes from programs that didn't spend their money in the previous year. Investments that should have been made in the year 2000-01 in the agricultural community were not made by this government.

The Harris government likes to talk about grandiose announcements, but they don't spend the money where it's most urgently needed in rural Ontario right now. This is simply shifting money from one column to another.

As you read through this budget, as you listen to the throne speech, there's not a single mention of agriculture. There's not a single mention of the word "farm" in that budget. That shows the lack of commitment of the Harris government to rural Ontario, and more importantly, to the farmers of this province. The number two industry in this province is totally neglected by the Harris government.

Worse yet, we know that there's going to be a continued crisis with commodity prices. We know that we're up against subsidies with the United States and European communities, but is there any money in this budget? There's no money in this budget allocated for emergency grain stabilization payments. There's no money budgeted for an increase in the market revenue insurance program. We know the desperate situation that farmers in this province are going to face, and again this government turns its back on the farmers of Ontario. The government likes to say to the farmers that they're patting themselves on the back for increasing the budget. But we know that Mike Harris promised in 1995 no cuts to agriculture. We know too that the agricultural budget in this province is 20% less than when the Harris government took office. You've abandoned the farmers of this province. Shame on the Harris government.

Let's talk a little bit about education. I would really urge the members on all sides of the House to read this wonderful book by Ruth Cohen. It's called *Alien Invasion: How the Tories Mismanaged Ontario*. There's a wonderful, wonderful chapter in this book called "The Caterpillar Speech." The caterpillar speech was presented by the Minister of Education at the time, John Snobelen. I'm going to read excerpts from the speech, because I think it's incumbent that people know what's happening, how this crisis in education has come about. This crisis in education has come about because of the initiatives of the Harris government. It's a sad day because of what's happened.

I'm going to quote from the speech. "There are two theories, broad theories of change management. One is this: shortening down the survival period or bankrupting the organization. Those are the two possibilities of causing change in an organization." This is a speech that the Minister of Education gave to bureaucrats, deputy ministers, in the Ministry of Education. Very, very sad.

"That kind of change, that quality of change, isn't available until you bankrupt how it is. Really bankrupt how it is. If you don't bankrupt it well, if you don't create a great crisis, you'll improve to death...."

"When you bankrupt an organization, not a lot of folks know much about that. It's well avoided, but not well studied. Inventing crisis is something we're not, again, intuitively good at."

During the question period for the Minister of Education, individuals had an opportunity to call in and speak to the minister. This was a participant on the telephone: "Here's my question. Do we need to bankrupt [the Ministry of Education and Training] before change can take place?"

Minister Snobelen: "In my opinion, yes, in a way that's responsible for what we want to accomplish, and that is to bankrupt those actions and activities that aren't consistent with the future that we're committed to.

"There's a couple of things that we need to get done, probably along the way. One of those ... and we've already made great attempts at this.... I don't think it's a completed process ... in my view ... and that is declaring a future." Well, we're seeing first-hand what that future for education is today as a result of this speech.

"One of the problems with that is there's a tendency to want to wait for others to prepare it for you. And it's not a very collaborative process. So that needs to be done before what needs bankrupting, and how to bankrupt it, occurs.

"Like to think of it as creating a useful crisis. The word 'bankrupt' might conjure up other images. Creating a useful crisis of what part of this will be about."

To the citizens of Ontario, these hollow, sad words that the Minister of Education put forth in the fall of 1995 are coming true and ringing true in this province today. We're seeing it all around. I'm glad to see we've got two members from London here tonight. I hope they read the London Free Press this morning where the Thames Valley District School Board is set to cut 75 jobs. They received more money, but they had a debt of \$1 million from the previous year and they're projecting a \$4.2-million deficit. We're going to see the elimination of 30 educational assistants, the elimination of secretarial jobs, the elimination of school support jobs, the elimination of part-time staff who supervise children at lunch.

"Board officials said they would try to avoid layoffs through retirement and voluntary buyouts 'where possible.'

"The province has threatened to take over any school board that doesn't balance its books."

I think the Thames Valley board is ripe for the picking, and it's all as a result of this government. It's great to see two London members here. I hope they hear these words from the Thames Valley District School Board and take heed of what they're warning us about within our own ridings.

I think it's important to get some other points on the record. I firmly believe that universally accessible, high-quality public education is a cornerstone of a just society and the key to our long-term prosperity. That's why the Ontario Liberals have as our priority the improvement of public schools so that all working families can count on the highest quality education possible for their children.

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What we've witnessed for the past six years, dating from this 1995 speech of John Snobelen, is the Harris government constantly eroding our public education system, seething disputes over extracurricular activities. Grade 11 textbooks are due to be replaced this year, but the money's not there because funding has been cut in half. School boards are getting \$40 million less to heat their schools, even though the cost of natural gas has skyrocketed. The price of gasoline is on the rise, but the government has cut \$19 million from busing. I can tell you that education for a Liberal government will be a priority.

The government's latest provision of a tax credit for private schools is not the answer. What we're going to see with this is probably in excess of \$500 million taken from the education system on top of the \$1.2 billion this government has already removed. It's an enormous reversal for this government, which has gone on record as opposing what they're proposing today.

I truly have to say, on a personal note, that I recognize there are very many dedicated parents who wish to send their children to a faith-based school, and I recognize there is an issue of fairness. I've always respected that. I'm not personally opposed to funding of religious schools. I believe firmly that this is an issue that must be addressed, but it has to be addressed in a timely manner and in a manner that adequately deals with the issue of equity.

Catholic schools in this province are now fully funded. Along with full public funding of the Catholic school system comes the responsibility to admit children of all faiths, accept public governance, hire provincially certified teachers, fully implement the curriculum and accept rigorous and routine testing. This is a core issue of accountability for public funds.

I am adamantly opposed to this government's proposed tax credit for private schools. Those parents who choose to send their children to a private, for-profit secular school have made a personal choice and not one that I believe the taxpayers of Ontario should be paying for. By including all private schools in this issue, the Harris government has callously used religious minorities as a smokescreen to bring in a voucher system that will channel public funds to all private schools in this province—a very sad day.

I appreciate the extraordinary efforts many individuals have made in their sacrifices for their children. I believe the issue of fairness must be addressed. I'm prepared to strongly advocate for an acceptable solution. I'll continue to work with my colleagues in the Liberal Party toward developing a policy that truly addresses the issue of religious educational equity. This proposal, this tax credit, this voucher, is not the answer.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Ms Martel: I appreciated the comments that have been made. Because I won't get a chance to read this particular editorial into the record when I speak next, I thought I would highlight some of the points that have

been made. This, interestingly enough, is entitled "Education Tax Fight Has Just Begun"—Toronto Sun, Sunday, May 27, 2001, by Christina Blizzard. Some of the key points are as follows and reinforce what my colleagues in the Liberal Party have said:

"One of the most valid criticisms of the Tories on this issue is the way it was done. To include it in the budget bill is a fairly cynical ploy. It makes you think the Tories were hoping to catch everyone off guard by doing it through the back door.

"As recently as April 10, Premier Mike Harris had this to say about news reports his government was pondering the voucher route:

"[Vouchers] have never been espoused by me or the Minister of Education.... Nor do I think it will come as long as I'm Premier," he told reporters at the Royal York Hotel.

"I don't know if I can be more definitive about that."

"You can argue that a tax credit is not a voucher, I suppose. All the same, it certainly is a first, hefty step down that road. And no other province provides tax credits such as this, although some do provide funding directly to religious schools.

"This is such a significant change in education policy it really should have been part of the Tories' last election platform. Failing that, it should at least be a separate bill, with public hearings and a full debate. Instead, it will be lumped in with the budget bill.

"In fact, the Tories would be smart to not only break this out of the budget bill entirely, but then to have a free, recorded vote on it in the Legislature. That way, all MPPs would be on record as to how they voted...."

As well: Whatever prompted them to do this, the Tories were under increasing pressure to deal with inequities in the public school system. "Funding all faiths will simply undermine the public school system." That's from the Toronto Sun—

The Acting Speaker: Before we go on, I just want to address those of you who want to get up and speak. I suggest that you talk to your House leader and get him to schedule you for debate. If you insist on doing it back and forth across this aisle, you won't be here.

Comments and questions?

Mr Mazzilli: Those were very thoughtful words that I'm sure we'll all take to heart in this Legislature. Part of a progressive democracy, part of a progressive Legislature and a responsible government is also a responsible opposition. What we hear coming out of the opposition, quite frankly, is irresponsible. You want to have an open debate on things that are in the budget. Let's have that open debate. But some of the words we hear from our friends, like "I didn't make the choice, so why should I have to pay for it?" Do you know what? You're rambling off words you hear other partisan people making.

Did I have the choice when Jean Chrétien gave tax credits, that he's going around giving a billion dollars, Sheila Copps is running around the country giving away a billion dollars to culture? Did I make that choice? No, I did not. Part of democracy is that I have to accept that

choice, because they are the government of the day. Did his constituents make the choice of giving away a billion dollars on culture? I don't know if it's the right choice—right or wrong—but Sheila Copps is able to do that. A billion dollars. Is it a priority? I don't know.

Did we have an election on the issue, as they are suggesting on a small tax credit for religious schools? A fully funded public system that's already \$13.8 billion, and now that we're extending a small tax credit to religious schools, somehow that's the end of the world. We're supposed to call an election on this issue. Do you know what? When the federal Liberals cut funding to the province for health and for education, when they give away billions for culture and other things, I don't see them going to the polls. I suggest Dalton McGuinty and Liberals stop fearmongering.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

Mr Lalonde: I want to thank the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London for his good words and also the position he's taken on rural municipalities and on agriculture.

I've been hearing on the other side that we should call our federal friends. I wonder if they have looked at the budget. The Ontario government will be receiving close to \$2 billion more for health care from the federal government. It's right there in your budget.

Also, I'm really surprised, when everybody was running around, all the small, rural area municipalities were going around to meet the deadline for the OSTAR program—again, I'm looking at this in the budget—not a single cent is showing as being expected or forecast from the federal government. Have you not signed the agreement with the feds?

Everybody is waiting to improve the water quality of their own municipalities. We have municipalities with E coli. We have municipalities with parasites. In my own area, Clarence, Bourget and Hammond at the present time—they were told last week to boil their water. But there's absolutely nothing from this government that will protect the health and security of our people in rural areas.

Also, on the agricultural side, when the Liberals were in power, the budget for agriculture was \$565 million. Today it is down to \$446 million. Of the \$446 million, as my friend just said, \$40 million came from last year's budget, which was never used and will not be used again because we just can't meet the requirements your government is asking for.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired. 2040

Mr Caplan: It's a pleasure to comment. I commend my colleague from Thunder Bay-Atikokan and my colleague from Elgin-Middlesex-London on their very fine remarks. I know they both talked about aspects of the budget and how it has failed Ontario's working families. One of the most important things is the investment in young people and the investment that the province makes in post-secondary education. Back in 1995, when the government took over, they immediately cut \$400 mil-

lion from our colleges and universities. Just like that, it was gone.

In this budget they make the incredible claim that they are putting more money into post-secondary education at a greater rate than has ever happened before. When you look at the budget, they are committing \$100 million per year for the next three years. So they're not even replacing that which they extracted, that which they painfully cut, and have placed the burden on Ontario's students. They aren't even going to replace it in this budget, and they call this a commitment to the young people in the province of Ontario. It is an absolute disgrace.

I wanted to make one other comment about the revenues of the government. I look on page 48, where it says, "Revenue Outlook." It shows revenue from taxation down, income from government enterprises down, other revenue down. But there is one category where revenues are increasing in Ontario. That is in federal payments. Obviously, what's very clear is that the Ontario government is using federal dollars to pay for the programs in Ontario because their own revenues are declining. In your own budget it's very clear. It's a total shell game and the people of Ontario are no longer going to be fooled.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan has two minutes to respond.

Mrs McLeod: I note that the former Minister of Education has graced the House with his presence this evening. I'm sure he must be somewhat smug about the fact that we are referring so frequently to him this evening in our speeches, to an earlier speech that he made, and I suspect feeling somewhat satisfied as he reflects on the success that he and Mr Giorno in the Premier's back office have had in fulfilling the agenda that they set out not in a truly public fashion so many years ago, but certainly in a way that, looking back, we can identify quite clearly.

My colleague has referred to the "butterfly" speech. It's the same "create a crisis" speech that I referred to, described as a butterfly speech in a new publication, which quotes it in detail. I remember it without having to go back and reread it. That's the speech in which Mr Snobelen said, "I've never yet met a caterpillar who wanted to become a butterfly. So somehow we have to either convince the caterpillars that they want to become butterflies or, if we can't do that, we may just have to run over them." Well, that's clearly the view that this government has. They did their best to prepare the public to be receptive to their agenda, to attack public education, to attack trustees and teachers and even students, and they found the public wasn't buying, so they decided they would just run over everybody who was a supporter of public education, they would just slip in their tax credit and force it through with their majority, which is what they're about to do with this budget bill, and in the process of doing it they're not terribly concerned whether or not the caterpillars get run over, whether those crushed caterpillars are the trustees or the teachers or the parents

who have objected to this agenda all along and who can't now be heard by this government, or the students themselves, who will pay the price for a government that is prepared to take all power to force through its agenda but at the end of the day is prepared to accept no accountability for the impact of its action.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Martel: It will be no surprise to members tonight that in the short time I have I'm going to focus exclusively on part VII of the bill, which is the section where the government has now decided to use public money to fund private schools. I'm going to focus on this for two reasons. Whether or not some members of the Conservative Party want to admit it, this decision to use public money to fund private schools represents a fundamental change in public policy, education policy, in this province, and it has been done with absolutely no effort at having input from the population at large.

Second, I want to focus on it because it's clear evidence to me that this government continues on what has been a very meditated, conscious attack on the public school system since this government was elected, a public school system that by and large has served people in our province very well. In fact, when ministers of the crown of this government go abroad and talk to investors in other countries, they boast about our public school system and how good it is. Yet we have seen, through policy changes and underfunding, this government trying to undermine a system that has really served Ontario well.

The mandate of the first Minister of Education in this Conservative government, who is here with us tonight, has really been fulfilled, and one of the first things he did—that was on tape—was to say to his ministry staff, "We need to create a crisis in education." The government certainly did that, and we haven't got out from under that crisis ever since. A big part of that crisis has been this government's cut of well over \$1 billion now, since its election, in funding to public education in the province. That has had very serious consequences on students, on teachers, on families right across this province. It's worth emphasizing what the results of some of these cuts have been. Because of the cuts, in 1998 Ontario ranked 55th in North America in terms of elementary education funding. The US average for pupil funding is \$7,254, versus Ontario's \$4,709. We have over 138 schools that have closed or are slated to close in the next two years. Ten per cent fewer elementary schools have full-time principals in the last three years alone. In fact, only 85% of elementary schools now have full-time principals. Some 42% of elementary classrooms have 26 or more students, despite the government's rhetoric that class size is being reduced. For grade 2 students, class size has increased by more than 10%. We have 24% fewer elementary schools that have English-as-a-second-language programs. And in Ontario, especially in southern Ontario, Toronto and the GTA, where our communities are so multicultural, that is a significant and

serious problem for new immigrants who are trying to be integrated into our province.

With respect to busing, all boards have had their transportation budgets cut. In the Hamilton-Wentworth board, for example, this has resulted in a loss of \$1.2 million in busing services for 1,500 students. I won't even get into the problems of busing in northern Ontario.

More than 65% of elementary schools report that students are sharing worn, out-of-date textbooks. We've got more than 34,000 children in elementary schools alone on a waiting list for special-education services.

Since 1997, we've had a 38% decrease in elementary school psychologists. At the secondary level, the loss of psychologists has been calculated at 30%. At a Cornwall school where a student was arrested for making death threats, the board could only afford one school psychologist for its 37 schools.

The following are cuts in elementary schools last year: 44% of elementary schools in the province had no music teacher; 63% had no physical education teacher; 62% had no English-as-a-second-language teacher; 82% had no full-time librarian; design and technology teachers have been cut by 48% in elementary schools since 1998; finally, since the Conservatives came to power, enrolment in Ontario has increased by 59,000 students, while the number of teachers has decreased by 11,399. In view of the increase in student population and the decrease in teacher population, you'd think this government would want to invest significantly in public school funding in this province. The reality is that we are dealing already with a loss of well over \$1 billion from the system and a government that now proposes to take \$300 million, when the rebate scheme is fully in place, year in and year out, again out of the system.

If I thought it was only \$300 million, I may not be so concerned. I would definitely oppose it because I do not believe for one moment we should be using public money to fund private schools. But I don't believe for one moment that we are only looking at a sum total of \$300 million. I believe, first and foremost, the rebate and the cost for that, which is a cost that comes directly out of funding for public schools, will be much larger than \$300 million, and I also firmly believe that the rebate system is the first step toward what the government really wants to do, which is a voucher system for schools in this province. That's why I say this price tag is going to be far more than \$300 million and this rebate scheme, in my mind, is but the first step down the road where the government has always wanted to take us, and that is to voucher schools in this province.

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This is the legacy to date with respect to the very negative effects of this government's cuts to education, which are in the order of well over \$1 billion. It is very clear that money that should be used to invest in the public school system is money that will now go to support the private school system. I don't say that just by myself. The Minister of Education of this government has already made it clear. You will recall that when the

United Nations came out and made comments about whether Ontario should fund other religious faiths, the Minister of Education said, "We've been very clear that our goal is a good quality public education, and the estimates of \$300 million needed to fund religious schools would be \$300 million that would come out of the public school system."

It is very clear that this is where the money is coming from to fund private schools—out of money that should be going to the public system. As I said earlier, I don't believe it's going to be only \$300 million. I think it's going to be a lot more than that, and I think this takes us well down the road to voucher schools, which is where the government really wants to be.

Earlier, in response to comments from the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, I quoted an editorial that was in Toronto Sun on the weekend and I want to quote another one. This is from Monday, May 28, 2001. The Toronto Sun editorial is headed, "One For All And All For One." I'll quote parts of it:

"True, it's only a partial subsidy on the first \$7,000 of tuition, starting at 10% next year and levelling off at 50% in 2006. But it's a continuation of Tory undermining of the public school system by earmarking public funds to other school systems....

"Latter-day Tory rhetoric about this being a further extension of school 'choice' is absurd. No one is denying parents the 'choice' of putting their children into private schools. But what the Harris Tories are now saying (although they used to say the opposite) is that parents who choose to do this have a right to funding by the state. Why?

"This government has plenty of work to do in fixing the public education system, which must accept every child, unlike any other system, and is the glue that holds a multicultural society together....

"Finally, that the Tories plan to allow such a precedent-setting move to proceed as part of an omnibus budget bill—without separate public hearings and a separate bill—is arrogant.

"Then again, the whole idea is wrong, the rationale is wrong and the implementation is wrong."

I use those quotes very purposely, because everyone knows the Toronto Sun normally would support anything this government does. When the Toronto Sun, in two editorials, back to back—on the weekend and earlier this week—tells you this is wrong, surely they are sending you a signal. It is wrong. We should not be making a fundamental change to the funding of education in the system, which we are doing, through the back door in a budget bill, without any kind of province-wide public hearings. We are making a fundamental change to allow public funds to be used for private schools, and that is wrong.

I hope that Speaker Carr will agree with the point of order that was put forward by our House leader today, which is that this bill should be divided and that we should deal with a separate bill that deals with this

government's decision to go down the road to use public money to fund private schools.

Even if it doesn't happen that he will support it, this government is surely obliged, with respect to such a fundamental change, to allow the public to have their say. That is why New Democrats have been consistent in calling on this government to have full province-wide public hearings on this bill, in the same way your predecessor Bill Davis had on a former government bill where there were 80 days of public hearings so that people could have their say. This move is wrong. We should not be using public money to fund private schools. The government should have full public hearings, because I think the public will come out and say exactly that.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Galt: I'm interested in the remarks made by the member for Nickel Belt. She really zeroed in on what she said is the funding of private schools. I think of it in terms of independent schools. I guess she's opposed to choice, because that's really what it's about, having a choice. They already pay. They pay completely for the public education system and then they pay several thousand dollars for their independent school, whether it be for cultural purposes or for religious purposes.

I think she forgets that we've increased the spending in the public system by some \$360 million this year. She talks about cuts in the education system. I would challenge her to tell us which year she can identify that cuts occurred. I don't know which year she's referring to, because in every year since we took office it has steadily increased. Maybe she's talking pre-1995, when in fact the NDP was in office.

We are indeed committed to quality education in the public system, if you look at our track record. I hear a lot of teachers complimenting us on the curriculum, complimenting us on the report card, and also things like teacher testing that we're doing out there. There are just so many things this government has done to improve quality of education.

She also referred to the undermining of the public system. I see this as a real opportunity for the public system—whether it be the separate board or the public board—to compete and demonstrate how good they actually are. I don't see this as a disadvantage for them. I see this as a real opportunity and I have no doubt that they'll rise to the occasion and that all students will be better off because of it.

Mr Peters: I want to commend the member from Nickel Belt for her comments. I can tell you when the students in this province are going to be truly better off, and that's going to be the day, two years down the road, when this government is gone, because we've seen the constant attacks on the education system by this government since day one, since they were elected in 1995.

Interjections.

Mr Peters: Obviously the truth hurts, when you start to hear them speak up on the other side.

We've heard the caterpillar-butterfly speech the former Minister of Education gave, where he talked about bankrupting the system and about creating a crisis in the system. When you read the full context of that speech, it sends shivers up your spine because of what we've seen happen: what was said in 1995 has come true today. It's a really sad day because of what has happened to the education system in this province under the watch of this government. You've abandoned students, you've abandoned teachers and you've abandoned the parents in this province. You try to claim making the system better; if anything, you've turned the system around and made it worse. You've brought us to this point here today where we're seeing vouchers in front of us that are going to be used for private and secular schools in this province.

In my last few comments, I want to quote some comments an individual made. "Working farms are becoming an endangered species. It's a capital-intensive industry.... Trade wars between the US and Europe are affecting prices. National and international forces have pushed their [farmers'] backs to the wall. Quebec, Alberta and Saskatchewan are actively helping farmers. Ontario is without assistance or they have ad hoc assistance. Farmers need tools to compete...." Do you know who said that? The Premier of the province said that in 1990. They've abandoned farmers since 1995. They claim they're helping them—no cuts to agriculture—but we've seen a 20% cut in the agricultural budget, a disgrace by this government.

Mr Mazzilli: I paused for a moment for everyone to come back to what we were talking about, and that is Bill 45, the budget act.

One thing that's been common in this province and in this country is that different social organizations come up with a budget, and the budget should mirror their own on the day the budget is released. One thing I've failed to see so far, after the release of this budget with about \$60 billion in spending and revenue, is Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals come up with a budget of their own. How would they spend the people's money in Ontario? That is a fundamental question that we should be asking and that I believe the media should be asking.

We heard the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London talking about the farmers, whom the Liberals abandoned in 1990.

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We've heard issues in regard to "not enough spending here": \$13.8 billion in publicly funded education. What do they propose it should be? Should it be \$16 billion, \$17 billion? Tell us. We've never heard that from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals.

The member from Elgin-Middlesex-London, can we hear what kind of support you would provide to the farmers of Ontario? Can we hear that? Tell the media; tell your farmers. Come out with the number. We're looking forward to that day where we can see a solid issue.

My friend from Niagara today certainly made an appeal to the Speaker in dividing certain bills up in

voting on those. I would like to see that, because Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals wouldn't know which side to take on most of these issues, and I would actually welcome that.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Caplan: I certainly want to commend the member from Nickel Belt on her comments. She focused mainly on the area of education. I would just say not only to her but to all members of the chamber but especially the member from London-Fanshawe, on May 4, 1999, then Minister of Education Dave Johnson stood in this House and he said, "I assure the member opposite that over \$15 billion will be spent this year for all schools and education programming in this province."

So if that member, if the government, is correct—and I don't believe necessarily that they are because they play with numbers—says \$13.8 billion is being spent on education in the province of Ontario today, what happened to \$1.2 billion from May 4, 1999? Where did it go? If that's not a cut, what is? Where the heck is the money? The member can stand up and talk about, "We're spending more," but according to their own education minister there is a direct cut of \$1.2 billion.

I'd also like to read into the record comments of another minister of the Harris government, and that's Minister Janet Ecker. She wrote, "While the government recognizes the right of parents to choose alternative forms of education for their children, it continues to have no plans to provide funding to private religious schools or to parents of children that attend such schools. As we set out in our submission to the UN, extending funding to religious private schools would result in fragmentation of the education system in Ontario and undermine the goal of universal access to education"—Janet Ecker, Minister of Education, the province of Ontario.

I'd ask the members—that was then, this is now—where is the mandate to do this?

The Acting Speaker: The member for Nickel Belt has two minutes to respond.

Ms Martel: I'd like to thank the members from Northumberland, Elgin-Middlesex-London, London-Fanshawe and Don Valley East for making some comments. There are a couple of things I'd like to say in response.

The member from Don Valley East put it very correctly on the record. The former Minister of Education, before M^{me} Ecker, talked about how much money the government was going to spend, was committed to: over \$15 billion. The government is nowhere near spending that amount of money. We want to talk about the losses. It's very clearly seen from 1999 on, and this has been very well documented.

Secondly, with respect to thoughts that providing a tax credit is going to put pressure on public and Catholic boards to enhance the quality of education, there was a very interesting letter to the editor that was written by Doreen Dewar, who is the chairwoman of the Rainbow District School Board, which is one of the district school boards in my riding. She said the following: "To equate

tax credits with putting 'pressure on public and Catholic boards to enhance the quality of education' is simply beyond the realm of credibility."

She made a couple of points: private schools are not mandated to use ministry-approved textbooks or teach the new secondary school curriculum. Secondly, private schools need not employ teachers who are college of teachers-certified. Thirdly, although it wasn't in her article but I'll raise it here, we also discovered clearly today that many of these schools are exempt from the Human Rights Code, specifically from the provisions with respect to discrimination.

But the government thinks it's so very appropriate to use tax credits as a means of trying to force competition between public and Catholic schools for students. Is the government prepared to ensure that private schools have to meet the same obligations, both with respect to the delivery of the curriculum in this province and with respect to qualifications of teachers and with respect to allowing every student who wants to attend when they put public money into those schools—is the government going to change to ensure that the private schools meet all the standards that Catholic and public schools have to at this point?

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Mazzilli: Certainly it's a privilege to get up on behalf of my constituents of London-Fanshawe and speak to Bill 45, which I believe is a very balanced budget. We heard the finance minister stand in his place and say, "Mr Speaker, the budget is balanced." That's something that we have not heard of in this province for many years—the third consecutive balanced budget in the province of Ontario, from the Mike Harris government.

One thing we've heard continually from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals is that, "You should spend more here, you should spend more there and you should tax our working families." I know that our Premier, Mike Harris, will fight for working families and will not allow Dalton McGuinty and the provincial Liberals to get their hands close to our working families' money any time soon. The reason I say that is because, as I said before, most often what we see at the end of a federal budget or a provincial budget being introduced is different social organizations coming up with a budget that would mirror their own. If they were the finance ministers, these are the items they would support. Although I've seen some of those budgets and perhaps do not agree with all of the components, I would welcome and I would challenge the media and the public to ask Dalton McGuinty and provincial Liberals to come up with a budget that they would produce, and stop complaining about, "You're not spending enough here and there." What we hear every day in this Legislature are different critics and every one of them gets up and says, "You're not spending enough in this area. You're not spending enough in that area. You're not spending enough in the other areas." I'd like to know from them, if they were the government and they had a finance minister, where they would spend the money.

We're focused on working families and tax cuts. Tax cuts are directly proportionate to growth and that is something certainly the public in Ontario has understood. Throughout North America, in all the jurisdictions, there's a direct proportion between taxation and growth. In this province we had reached the direction where there was no growth and it was simply because our taxes were too high proportionate to anyone bothering to invest any money. We saw a pull-out of investments in all kinds of areas and negative growth for so many years.

Of course, what happens during that? When governments have less money, services are cut, so we saw services cut when the provincial Liberals had a \$2-billion deficit and we saw services cut when the NDP had a deficit, and they certainly added on to the debt. Mike Harris and our government understood that could not go on. Deficits and debts are only a way of mortgaging our future. It will only mean less services later, as opposed to more. With this balanced budget, the good news is that as we go along we can look forward to more services, not less, as we hear from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals.

Out of a \$60-billion budget, you'd figure Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals would have an issue with more than a simple tax credit for religious schools that amounts to some \$300 million. Surely there's more they could go after than that. Quite frankly, that is the only thing they've gone after. They've gone after the hard-working families that are going to receive a 10% deduction of a total tuition up to a maximum of \$7,000. We're talking about \$700.

Dalton McGuinty stands in his place every day and repeats the words "working family." The way he and his Liberal friends behave, they wouldn't know a working family if they tripped over them. That is not how you behave with working families. Working families work very hard for their money. The people in my riding who work at some of the manufacturing plants, some of the construction locations, work hard for their money. They expect services and they certainly expect deductions.

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Let me understand this. If you have the rich who invest and are allowed to capital-cost things, allowed to depreciate things, somehow that's OK. But if a working family takes a tax credit because they want to send their child to a religious school, somehow that's wrong. We believe differently. Mike Harris and our government believe differentially. Those working families deserve that \$700 tax credit—and that's the maximum. We keep hearing about the maximum. We keep hearing Dalton McGuinty talking about Upper Canada College. For the life of me, I don't know where he gets those facts. Some of those tuitions are \$30,000. That's not what this is intended for.

I have a couple of schools in my riding—London Parental Christian School, which I visited and toured. At some of these schools they have family caps. I forget exactly what they are, but it's something like \$5,000. Where some families who have more than one child—maybe four children—obviously can't afford the \$3,000

tuition per child, they cap it at a family limit and do fundraising in the community, and so on, to put their children through. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals have a problem with those working families who have made that choice.

As I said about choices—not that it's right or wrong—we saw Sheila Copps running around the country giving away some \$700 million in the area of culture. I don't know whether that's right or wrong. But we're not even talking about half that amount, and yet Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals want to attack those working families.

On behalf of the working families in my riding who have chosen this option, I support them, and I support them in taking a tax credit. I see the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London is here. As I said, I want to see a budget from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals. Approximately \$60 billion—I want to see a budget. What would you commit to farmers? What would you commit to education? What would you commit to health care? What would you commit to roads? It's typical: you don't know.

I spoke earlier about my good friend from Niagara, who submitted a request to the Speaker today about splitting up the bill. Certainly I don't support anything that would draw out the process too long, but I do support voting on different components of a bill, because I think the people who actually would be afraid of that are the Liberals.

I spoke about this on another day, on An Act to amend the Public Service Act, whereby the civilian members of the Ontario Provincial Police simply have choice. Obviously, Mike Harris and our government believe people have the right to make their own choices. What we heard is that some of the civilian members from the Ontario Provincial Police wanted to leave OPSEU and join the OPPA. We believe they should have that choice.

Clearly, we've heard from the NDP that they don't support that choice, and they believe all provincial employees should be represented by OPSEU. I don't have a problem with that position. I don't agree with it, but they made a decision. Behind closed doors, do you know what the Liberals are saying? They're talking to the OPPA representatives and they're saying, "We support that, but it's other parts of the bill that we don't support." Then they go to the OPSEU members and say, "We oppose that bill."

When it comes to voting on different components of a bill and separating it out, I think there's only one group of people that is not willing to do that here. It's Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals. I would certainly support anything for more democracy in this Legislature. As I said before, I believe a responsible Legislature or a responsible government also requires a responsible opposition. Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals are certainly not up to the job and they're not a credible and responsible opposition in this province.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Caplan: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I believe the member used unparliamentary language. He

made some comments about hypocrisy. I believe that's unparliamentary and that should be withdrawn.

The Acting Speaker: I didn't hear it. If the member did use anything unparliamentary, I would ask him to withdraw.

Mr Mazzilli: I did not use that word.

The Acting Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Caplan: I certainly want to comment on the member from London-Fanshawe and his comments. I do understand that you'd be very comfortable with provisions in the budget. It has lifted a halfway measure from what was offered by the Canadian Alliance in the federal election, and quite frankly, that party and that idea were soundly rejected by the people of Ontario.

I do object to the fact that the Harris government doesn't have the guts to go to the people of Ontario and say, "This is our plan. This is our program. This is what we want to do. We stand solidly and firmly behind this, and if elected, we will do that." You see, that was never part of the conversation and the discussion in 1999, in the June 4 election here in the province of Ontario. I challenge the member and all of the members opposite, when they have said, when the Premier has said, when the Minister of Education has said—I'll read it into the record. I'll quote again from a letter written by Janet Ecker, Minister of Education, where she said, "While the government recognizes the right of parents to choose alternative forms of education for their children, it continues to have no plans to provide funding to private religious schools or to parents of children that attend such schools." Yet in the 2001 budget, that's exactly what they did.

Any responsible legislator, any responsible person who wants to seek elected office and has some plan to take these kinds of measures, a significant policy shift, should, surely to God, stand fully and firmly and say, "This is our plan and this is our program," and have the guts to do so.

Today there was a by-election announced in Vaughan-King-Aurora. I would say to the people there that you are going to have ministers of the crown and you're going to have the Premier come traipsing in making all kinds of policy statements, announcements and promises, but we know that they're fully prepared to shift those positions after the vote from what they say before the vote. I say to the people of Vaughan-King-Aurora, beware. Be very aware of what this government's track record is when it comes to prior to an election and after an election. They say one thing; they do another. As any responsible person will see, the record speaks for itself.

Ms Martel: I say to the member from London-Fanshawe, with all due respect, as he tries to convince the public that part VII of this bill is just a minor tax change and really doesn't fundamentally change how we fund public education, people are seeing through this. What you are proposing is a fundamental change to the way many governments have funded public education. We have not used public funds to support private schools in this province. We have not done that. Your govern-

ment proposes to do it under the guise of a tax bill along with hundreds of other changes in the hope that perhaps the public won't pick up on what you're doing or perhaps will think, as you do, that it's just part and parcel of some of the tax changes you've been making all along.

It seems to me that the public of Ontario, in the face of what really is a fundamental change to how we use public dollars, should have the right to be consulted. Even your predecessor, Bill Davis, who was responding to a constitutional right that Catholics had and an obligation of the government to fund, as a result of that constitutional right—even Bill Davis, in the face of that legal right, had full province-wide public hearings to allow people to have their say. Eighty days across this province is what the Liberals did after they were elected to ensure that people had their say on that bill.

I think you should do the same here. I think this bill has the potential to be very divisive, extremely divisive. I would encourage your government to separate this bill and have full public hearings so people can have their say.

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Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Labour): I think the fish-like flip-floppery of the member opposite from Don Valley East with respect to positions on issues is hilarious. If you want to go to the people and ask them to determine whether or not they think the Conservatives do and implement what they say they will or whether the Liberals flip-flip, I would be very open to that question being put to the public. I think the public would answer very clearly. I can list chapter and verse, rhyme off from red book to red book to pink book to blue book to paisley book that you people produced that absolutely contradicts positions you took.

This is the party that said in 1995, "We're in favour of tax cuts," and voted against every one of them. Every one of the tax cuts. This is the party of Gerard Kennedy down there, who said in the Bloor West Villager paper the day after the budget, "The Liberals say it's an issue of fairness. Private schools do have to be funded...." He said that in the newspaper. The education critic from the Liberal Party and his fearless leader, Dalton McGuinty, the kingfishy flip-flopper of all time, said, "It's just a matter of when and how." Well, when and how are you going to fund these schools? You said you're going to, you just don't know when or how, and Gerard Kennedy said it's a matter of fairness that you do that. Who's got two positions?

Then you produce a pamphlet that they're handing out to the people of the province of Ontario and you conveniently forget to put in there that you're going to withdraw this bill if you ever get elected to government. Why would you do that? We know why you did that. You don't want to tell the public what you're going to do. Why? You don't want to offend this group of voters at the expense of that group of voters, because you like to think you can get all the votes, and you've succeeded only in getting a lot fewer than we get.

Mr Peters: The member opposite talks about governments saying they're going to do something or not do something. Nobody ever said in the Blueprint that they were going to do this.

But I want to say in response to the member from London-Fanshawe that by including all private schools, the Harris government has in effect callously used religious minorities as a smokescreen to bring in a voucher system that will channel public funds to all private schools, including elite and for-profit institutions. A careful analysis of the actual tax credit clearly demonstrates that the primary beneficiaries are those who send their children to secular institutions. The finance minister has said the new provincial tax credit will apply strictly to the academic portion of tuition. The credit will be 50% of the amount up to a maximum of \$5,000 when fully phased in. On the religious portion of the tuition there are existing tax benefits as charitable donations, and the minister has been adamant there will be no mixing of these benefits with the proposed tax credit.

The majority of Ontario's private schools are small operations, charging \$4,000 to \$9,000 per year, and about two thirds of those private schools are faith-based schools. Ed Morgan of the Canadian Jewish Congress calculates that the benefit is generally worth only \$600 or \$700 on tuition of around \$7,000 a year per student. However, for strictly secular for-profit schools, a maximum of up to \$3,500 can be benefited.

This is strictly unacceptable. You want to talk about dealing with the issue of fairness and equity? Then let's have a full discussion on this. Let's not bring something out in a budget. Let's strike an all-party committee and deal with this issue once and for all, because what you're doing here is using the religious schools in this province as a smokescreen, and that's a very dangerous thing. You're pulling the wool over their eyes and it's a very sad day for what you've done to those parents who have worked hard for their children's education.

The Acting Speaker: The member for London-Fanshawe has two minutes to respond.

Mr Mazzilli: I think certainly the Minister of Labour summed this up very nicely. No matter what tax cut the Mike Harris government comes up with, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals will vote against it. And that's exactly what they're doing here: they're voting against a small tax credit or tax cut for hard-working families that have chosen to send their children to some sort of alternative education.

This is not a surprise: it's a continuation of over 100 tax cuts in the province of Ontario that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals have failed to vote for. They feel that by voting against tax cuts they're somehow representing working families. I've said it before and I'll continue saying it: until they come up with the policies for working families, it would suggest that Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals wouldn't know a working family if they tripped over them. I will continue to say that, because there's no evidence in any of their policies that suggests they're going to help working families.

The first thing I suspect they should do is come clean and provide a budget. What would a Dalton McGuinty budget look like? We've provided our budget; Mr Flaherty has provided the budget bill, Bill 45. It lays out clearly what the rules in the province of Ontario are. The rules are certainly more tax cuts to generate more government revenue for health care and for education, which we have done in this budget. Yet all we can hear from Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals are attacks on every part of this legislation that helps out working families. Certainly I would suspect that tomorrow the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London and his leader will come up and suggest what this province should spend to assist farmers, what they should spend for education, what they should spend for health.

The Acting Speaker: The member's time has expired.

It being 9:30 by some clock, this House stands adjourned until 10 am, May 31, 2001.

The House adjourned at 2127.

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Oak Ridges	Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC) Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip, deputy government House leader / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement, leader parlementaire adjoint	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Stoney Creek	Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Cleary, John C. (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales	Thornhill	Molinari, Tina R. (PC)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, George (L)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Waterloo-Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Education, government House leader / ministre de l'Éducation, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Willowdale	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
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Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)	York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
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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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