



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

Third Session, 37th Parliament

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de l'Ontario

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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 25 June 2002

Mardi 25 juin 2002

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 25 June 2002

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 25 juin 2002

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I wish to bring to the attention of the Legislature a problem that too many of my constituents are encountering. Many Hamilton seniors, like my constituent Marie Clayton, are unable to enter a long-term facility even when spaces become available. After spending two years on a waiting list, many of them are discovering they will not be accepted into a long-term-care residence unless they have an attending physician. As you can imagine, this is causing incredible distress for our frail elderly and their families.

Seniors on Hamilton Mountain are telling me they are unable to find a physician to attend to them, no matter how hard they try. One of the reasons for this is the Ministry of Health's funding formula, which pays a physician significantly less for a visit to a nursing home than a call to a seniors' residence complex.

Another major problem is the overall shortage of physicians in Ontario. For years, we have known we don't have enough doctors, but this government only increased the number of spaces in Ontario's medical schools a year ago. In addition, the Ministry of Health was supposed to accredit 40 foreign-trained physicians this year, but so far it has certified less than 10. With a system like this, is it any wonder doctors are so scarce?

Even many of the fortunate seniors who manage to get a bed are confronted with inadequate conditions. Often, there's not enough nursing time to assist them with eating, change their diapers regularly or give them a bath more than once a week.

Ontario's seniors have contributed a lifetime of hard work to our society. They've played by the rules. They've paid their taxes. Let them live their last years in life with dignity.

WATER QUALITY

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): Last Monday evening, June 11, my colleague Bill Murdoch from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and I travelled to my riding to attend a council meeting of the town of North Perth in Listowel. The purpose of our visit was to discuss with

council the challenges facing Atwood and Gowanstown particularly, two small hamlets in North Perth, where many residents rely on communal wells for their water. The main issue of concern was how the municipality and the residents could meet the requirements of the new drinking water protection regulations in a reasonable way.

I was pleased to report at that meeting that Ontario's finance minister had just announced \$245 million to help improve the safety of drinking water, including funds to help municipalities upgrade their water systems to meet our tough new standards.

I'd like to thank my colleague Bill Murdoch for taking the time to meet with council and the residents of Gowanstown and Atwood in his capacity as parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment and Energy. I'd also like to thank North Perth Mayor Vince Judge, the council and municipal staff for welcoming Mr Murdoch and me to Monday's council meeting.

This is an important issue for rural Ontario and it's one that presents many challenges. I'd like to thank the Premier and the Minister of Finance as well as the Minister of Environment and Energy for recognizing the scope of this problem and for addressing it in the budget. I look forward to continuing to work with them to find the most feasible ways to meet our goal of safe drinking water for all Ontarians.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I rise today first of all to commend the Hamilton board of education for standing up to this government in regard to the funding formula.

Last night the board passed a deficit budget, at great risk to themselves individually as trustees, because of a \$16-million shortfall as the result of the inadequate funding formula and being shortchanged by this government when it comes to education funding.

Our schools are in bad shape. We need more computers, more books and smaller classrooms. We have rooms, as I've raised in the House before, where roofs are leaking and kids' desks have to be moved when it rains.

This government does not see fit to properly fund education in Hamilton and across this province. It forces school trustees, who want to do the right thing, who are there for kids, to defy the law and the outrageous legislation this government has put in place to try to bully,

arm-twist and beat up school boards into going along with their crazy funding formula.

The reality is, the Hamilton board drew a line in the sand last night and said, "Enough is enough. The kids are the priority." Wes Hicks, a trustee for ward 8 with 20 years' experience, said it best when he said, "It's time to stand up for the kids." The Hamilton board of education understands that. It understands that funding is a priority for classroom education. This government doesn't understand that. They are not concerned about the level of funding in the schools across this province. They've shoved off the funding formula to some review in November, and God only knows when they're going to change it; maybe in time for the next election.

The reality is that the Hamilton board took a courageous stand. They stood up for the kids in Hamilton. They stood up for quality education. This government doesn't have the guts or the courage to do the same thing.

VINK FARMS

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): Today is a special day in my riding of Peterborough for Vink Farms, located near Norwood. Another milestone will be celebrated at Vink Farms, a farming operation that began almost 75 years ago, when a new dairy facility will be opened later on this afternoon.

For the past 10 years, owner Hans Vink has been a board member of Dairy Farmers of Ontario and has been the provincial representative. His herd has been the three-time top production herd in Peterborough county, in 1998, 1999 and 2000.

Some 135 Holstein dairy cows will be milked three times a day within a 19,400-square-foot facility in a state-of-the-art Westfalia-Surge double 8 parallel milking parlour. Today's herd will be housed in a free-standing stall on sand bedding featuring a high-roof canopy and climate-controlled curtain sidewalls for maximum ventilation. Each cow's activity will be monitored by identification leg bracelets every minute of the day to help with production, breeding and health monitoring. To minimize dirty feedage, the cow walk alley has a computer-timed flush system that utilizes earthen manure storages. Environmental concerns, while significantly considered, are felt to be minimal but identifiable, since the fresh water supply for the entire facility is topographically below the two storages.

Please join me in congratulating Hans Vink and his wife, Cathy, in their new business venture and in wishing them continued success for their future in farming.

ENGLISH CLASSES

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): This year, over 130,000 newcomers will make Ontario their new home. Thousands of these newcomers will settle right here in Toronto. New Canadians bring skills and knowledge to our cities and provinces, but without the ability to speak the English language, too many will become under-

employed and marginalized. Adult ESL programs are a vital part of our education system. Newcomers depend on these classes to acquire the language skills that enable them to find meaningful employment and participate in their children's education.

The Toronto District School Board does not receive accommodation grants for adult ESL programs. The board receives no funding to pay for the space occupied by these essential programs.

On behalf of the campaign for stable funding of adult ESL classes, a coalition of organizations seeking improved funding, I want to deliver to the Minister of Education these postcards from students in my community who fear they will be left out in the cold. In your review of the funding formula, Madam Minister, I urge you to ensure quality education and equality of opportunity for Ontario students by improving the funding of adult ESL classes. In doing so, new Canadians will be guided and given the opportunity to become productive citizens of Ontario.

1340

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I'm proud to stand in my place today and say that I stand shoulder to shoulder with the Hamilton school board trustees, who under the leadership of board chair Judith Bishop took on this government, standing up to you in favour of standing for the kids in Hamilton.

Those nine trustees are to be applauded. The names of those courageous trustees are Ray Mulholland, Wayne Marston, Lillian Orban, Wesley Hicks, Robert Barlow, Bruce Wallace, Ian Thompson and Reg Woodworth. These trustees said to this government, "You're not putting enough money into the system to give our kids the education they deserve," so they stood up to you in favour of those kids in Hamilton who need a decent education.

You centralized power in this province in terms of education in a way that would make Stalin proud and then you expect school board trustees to do your dirty work. You expect them to stand up to Hamiltonians and other citizens across this province and say, "There's not enough money for the kids and we're the ones to blame." Well, that's not going to happen.

Ottawa-Carleton was the first board. Hamilton is the second board. I urge Hamiltonians to call your trustees and tell them you support their stand in support of our kids. For those other communities, call your trustees and fall in behind the leadership shown by Ottawa-Carleton and Hamilton. If everybody sticks together you can beat this government, and our kids deserve no less.

RENAISSANCE FAIRE

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Mr Speaker, I beg your leave to rise in the House and report on an outstanding event in Durham riding. The third annual Renaissance

Faire took place this past week in Palmer Park in Port Perry. With its minstrels, mimes, buskers, storytellers, artists, craftspersons and a variety of other entertainment, the event offered something for all ages. This was an opportunity to step back in time to the era of lords, ladies, serfs and vassals.

Unfortunately, there is time to mention only a few of the special events. One of these was a celebrity chess challenge featuring the Borelians and the Uxbridge Players, who played the role of live chess pieces. There was Elizabethan swordplay provided by Peter Hurley, and a demonstration of dry stone wall building by John Shaw Rimmington.

A few of the other events were clay sculpting for kids, led by Jane Macintosh; the making of banners under the direction of Jennifer Hardie; and a Raku kiln demonstration, with tea ceremony hosted by Edwin Lougueville. On Sunday there was a coracle building demonstration from Paul Williams, and 16th century folkdance workshops were also part of the pleasant weekend.

The Renaissance Faire is a relatively new attraction, but it demonstrates the diverse variety of history, talent and enthusiasm among Durham residents. There were over 20 sponsors, including the Ontario Arts Council, the township of Scugog, the Scugog Chamber of Commerce and the downtown BIA.

This past weekend in Palmer Park was an age of chivalry that is still very much alive in the community, and I'm sad to say the member from York North was unable to attend.

PREMIER OF ONTARIO

Mr George Smitherman (Toronto Centre-Rosedale): As this legislative session comes to a close, I want to take this opportunity to remind members and Ontarians about some of the sayings we've been able to use in relation to Ernie Eves.

We talked about Ernie Eves's million-dollar mood swing when he quit one day and ran the next, running up a cost of a million dollars to taxpayers. We said Ernie Eves has more positions than the Kama Sutra on certain issues. He's like nailing Jell-O to the wall. And we're reminded today of the extent to which this guy will change his mind on any given day. He is trying to use confusion and make it seem like a strategy.

Earlier today this Premier, who last week said that tax cuts should be delayed, said that the delay may be cancelled in the fall. If we needed any more evidence of the extent to which that guy, Ernie Eves, is willing to use confusion to create the impression that he knows what he's doing, we had it from that guy today.

Instead of talking about bringing forward these tax cuts in the fall, maybe he should stand in his place and say that he won't liquidate, that he won't have a fire sale and liquidate the 49% of Hydro One that he proposes to do.

Those guys are so desperate to hang on to power, they will do and say anything.

MATTAWA VOYAGEUR DAYS

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): I'd like to personally invite everyone to Mattawa Voyageur Days, July 25 to 28. The town of Mattawa is located 45 minutes east of North Bay. This festival has so much to offer everyone, including a kids' fishing derby, fun in the sun, the Eau Claire Gorge guided tour, dam tour, golf tournament, Christmas in July turkey dinner, North Bay to Mattawa canoe race, lumberjack contest, dragon boat races, antique car shows, fireworks, tremendous concerts such as Diane Chase, Michelle Wright, Glass Tiger, Rik Emmett, Kim Mitchell, Ray Lyell and the Storm, Lighthouse and many more.

Wristbands are now on sale, \$20 in advance or \$25 at the gate. I would like to congratulate and thank Mayor Dean Backer, Jacques Begin and the committee and all the volunteers who make this festival a great attraction in the Nipissing region. For further information you can visit us at www.voyageurdays.com or phone 1-800-267-4222.

Interjection.

Mr McDonald: I'd like to repeat that number for the member from James Bay: 1-800-267-4222.

VISITORS

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): On a point of privilege, Mr Speaker: We have four guests who drove down from the city of North Bay. It's their first time here at the Legislature, and I'd like to introduce them: Marc Long, Khouri Abdallah, Chris and Paul Lamont. Welcome.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm very pleased to announce that we have some very special ESL students here from Cedarbrae Collegiate up in the west gallery.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We also have joining us in the Speaker's gallery today four Ontarians here to receive the internationally recognized l'Ordre de la Pléiade award for outstanding contributions to French-speaking communities. With us today are Monsieur Roger St-Louis, Yvon St-Arnaud, Madame Manon LePaven and Monsieur Edmond Chauvin. Please welcome our honoured guests.

MEMBERS' EXPENDITURES REPORT

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the individual members' expenditures for the fiscal year 2001-02.

STATUS OF BILL 122

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Yesterday the member for Prince Edward-Hastings introduced Bill 122, An Act to amend the Ontario Disability Support Program Act, 1997 to empower the Integrity Commissioner to determine the level of income support.

I have reviewed the bill and find that it is substantially similar to the MPP Compensation Reform Act, Bill 82, of last session. Mr Parsons's bill duplicates the mechanism in Bill 82 to authorize the Integrity Commissioner to consider the level of and recommend increases in support payments. Such increases, if recommended, would be mandatory and automatic and would represent a direct allocation of public funds.

Given the great similarity of this bill with Bill 82, the fact that Bill 82 was proposed by a minister of the crown and was accompanied by the Lieutenant Governor's recommendation, I find that Bill 122 is in fact a money bill and, as standing order 56 stipulates, may only be proposed by a minister of the crown.

I have therefore directed that Bill 122 be removed from the Orders and Notices paper.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on general government and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): Your committee begs to report the following bill with amendment:

Bill 58, An Act to amend certain statutes in relation to the energy sector / Projet de loi 58, Loi modifiant certaines lois en ce qui concerne le secteur de l'énergie.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Shall the report be received and adopted?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1351 to 1356.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Guzzo, Garry J.	O'Toole, John
Baird, John R.	Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Hastings, John	Runciman, Robert W.
Beaubien, Marcel	Hodgson, Chris	Sampson, Rob
Chudleigh, Ted	Jackson, Cameron	Spina, Joseph
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Stewart, R. Gary
Clement, Tony	Johnson, Bert	Stockwell, Chris
Coburn, Brian	Klees, Frank	Tascaona, Joseph N.
Cunningham, Dianne	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
DeFaria, Carl	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Dunlop, Garfield	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Elliott, Brenda	McDonald, AL	Witmer, Elizabeth
Eves, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Wood, Bob
Flaherty, Jim	Molinari, Tina R.	Young, David
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	
Gill, Raminder	Mushinski, Marilyn	

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Curling, Alvin	Martin, Tony
Bartolucci, Rick	Di Cocco, Caroline	McLeod, Lyn
Bisson, Gilles	Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted
Bountrogianni, Marie	Duncan, Dwight	Parsons, Ernie
Boyer, Claudette	Gerretsen, John	Patten, Richard
Brown, Michael A.	Gravelle, Michael	Peters, Steve
Bryant, Michael	Hampton, Howard	Phillips, Gerry
Christopherson, David	Hoy, Pat	Prue, Michael
Cleary, John C.	Kormos, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Conway, Sean G.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Cordiano, Joseph	Levac, David	Sergio, Mario
Crozier, Bruce	Marchese, Rosario	Smitherman, George

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 46; the nays are 39.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried. Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 10, 2002, the bill is ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NIAGARA HEALTH SYSTEM ELECTIONS ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LES ÉLECTIONS AU SEIN DU SYSTÈME DE SANTÉ DE NIAGARA

Mr Kormos moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 114, An Act to provide for the election of members of the Board of Trustees of the Niagara Health System / Projet de loi 114, Loi prévoyant l'élection des membres du conseil d'administration du Système de santé de Niagara.

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

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

The member for a short statement?

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): The Niagara Health System was imposed upon Niagara region by this government's restructuring of our health system and hospitals. This bill provides that at least 12 of the trustees of the Niagara Health System are to be elected to represent the area municipalities of the regional municipality of Niagara, providing for democracy, direct representation and accountability.

1400

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE ET À LA FAMILLE

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 130, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act to allow one Children's Aid Society access to information held by another Children's Aid Society / Projet de loi 130, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille afin de permettre à une société d'aide à l'enfance d'avoir accès aux renseignements détenus par une autre société d'aide à l'enfance.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Thank you very much, Speaker, for a very short statement. This bill amends the Child and Family Services Act to fill a loophole presently in the act which denies access to or transfer of information. This has had tragic consequences on certainly several cases across this province. I highlight the Gravel case, which is an ongoing public case that certainly would not have reached the stage it's at now had this amendment been in place.

MOTIONS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I move that the standing committee on public accounts be authorized to adjourn to St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, to attend the 23rd annual conference of the Canadian Council of Public Accounts Committees.

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

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CANADA DAY

Hon Carl DeFaria (Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors): It is my great pleasure and privilege to rise in the House today to speak to Canada Day 2002. Personally, this is a very special Canada Day. I was recently appointed Minister of Citizenship by Premier Ernie Eves, a position that brings me closer to the diverse community organizations and individuals I have been working with for many years.

Since the day that I arrived in this country as a young man from Portugal, I have been deeply honoured to be a part of this country and of the great province of Ontario. Ontario is a province of promise and opportunity, a province where human rights are respected and protected, where a young man's dream can become a reality. I am forever grateful.

I know my colleagues can all agree that we live in the best province and in the best country in the world. Ontario's status within Canada is secure. Our economic strength has helped us create a great quality of life for Ontarians.

As a government, we are continuing to work hard to strengthen Ontario's economy and create more jobs. Ontario receives nearly 60% of all immigrants to Canada, almost 150,000 this last year. By 2016, Ontario is expected to grow to nearly 14 million. Ontario is the choice of many newcomers to Canada because Ontario is a province of promise and opportunity.

This government is committed to helping skilled newcomers enter the labour force quickly and to become full participants in the Ontario economy. For me, and for millions more who have settled here, Ontario has met its promise and more, and I know that other newcomers to Canada feel the same way.

I think we can all agree that Canada and the province of Ontario are amazing places to live, work and raise a family. The United Nations has named Canada as one of the best places in the world to live.

The ideals of Canada Day go to the very notion of the society we should be creating in this country, a society where diversity is embraced, where every member of society is treated with respect, a society in which all of our children know they are valued members. Canada Day is important for all of us because it is vital that we remember where we have been and how far we have come.

It is also a chance to do more. It is the renewed opportunity for us to consider the kind of society we live in and to make it better for everyone. Now more than ever, we must take steps to ensure that Canada remains a land of promise and opportunity.

This is the kind of province we are working hard to build. I know that government members are with me in trying to realize this dream for Ontario.

On a final note, I want to invite all members of this House to join me on the front lawn of the Legislature at Queen's Park on July 1, Canada Day. We are expecting thousands to take part in the fun at our annual Canada Day celebrations from 11 am to 5 pm, so please join us as we commemorate the 135th birthday of our great nation.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): It is absolutely true that our forebears built a country that's the envy of the world. It is also true that the United Nations for more than four years in a row has said that we are the best place in which to raise a family and in which to live.

But upon this minister's shoulders is a grave responsibility, and that is to maintain that which we have. Right now, as we speak, we have the danger of losing that distinction of being the best country in the world. I'll tell you why.

There are certain categories the United Nations looks at when it makes these adjustments, when it makes these judgments. One of the categories is a good health care system. Our critics, Sandra Pupatello and Lyn McLeod, will tell you that you've closed hospitals. The lineups are

longer. You've let nurses go and not rehired them. We are in danger.

Our education critic, Gerard Kennedy, will tell you that you have closed schools and you have closed swimming pools. In addition, you have also fired nearly a quarter of all music teachers. They have disappeared from the classroom. Despite an increase in immigration, the number of schools with ESL programs has dropped 31%. We are in danger.

Our transportation critics, Mike Colle and Pat Hoy, will tell us Toronto is gridlocked and we are in danger. Your government has to ensure that there will be enough money and funding for transportation, and I'm speaking about public transportation. You need the money.

Our energy critics, Sean Conway and Michael Bryant, will tell you about the boondoggle in the energy system. You are about to sell part of Hydro, our crown jewel right here in Ontario. We are in danger.

1410

What about affordable housing? Our critic for housing, Mr Dominic Agostino, will tell you there is no affordable housing in Toronto. You haven't built any. We are in danger.

Finally, let me simply say this about your statement that this government is committed to helping skilled newcomers enter the labour force quickly and become full participants in the Ontario economy. I want to tell you, that too needs improvement. We are also in danger.

Why is it that we have right now very skilled workers—doctors, lawyers, accountants and all those who have been foreign-trained with great educational backgrounds—driving taxis, cleaning restaurants, delivering pizzas? It surely cannot be this Canada and this Toronto, Ontario, that this minister is speaking about. We are in danger.

Upon your shoulders is the responsibility to try to ensure that you bring back this Ontario, that you bring back this country to its former glory. You have that responsibility, and if you don't do it, even though you might think it's funny, McGuinty and the Liberals are ready to take that challenge into the future.

We are in danger. We are in danger of losing this great status that the United Nations has bestowed upon us. I simply say to you, on behalf of the Liberal caucus and Dalton McGuinty, long live this free Canada and God save the Queen.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I want to join the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Take your seat. We will start over.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just want to take a second to say that my colleague from Parkdale has spoken so eloquently of that danger. Let's make sure we don't lose that. Let's have Canada ruling as he talks about. Long live Canada.

The Speaker: The member for Trinity-Spadina.

Mr Marchese: I want to join the Minister of Citizenship in celebrating Canada Day and in celebrating the statement he has made and his remarks about immigrants. This is a country and a province of immigrants—we all know that—and they work hard. It's a country where these immigrants, each and every one, in the past, those who are coming and those who will come, come to work hard. Why? Because, as the Minister of Citizenship said, this is a place where a young man's dream can become a reality. That is true. For many immigrants, that in fact has been the case.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Young men and young women.

Mr Marchese: Young men and young women. He meant it generically, I'm sure, the royal "we."

But it is also true, I would say to the Minister of Citizenship, that it hasn't worked for everybody, not all of the time. You will probably admit that. While people work hard and make an honest living and some do well in this society and in this economy, there are some who are not so lucky and so fortunate. Those who work for minimum wage come to mind. It is true that those who work for \$6.85 an hour probably are not so happy with that wage, and that's why New Democrats believe that in order to give young men and women the opportunities they desperately want and need, we should help out a little bit. We should increase the minimum wage, because that's part of economic justice, it's part of a struggle for fairness, and we are committed to that struggle; we think you are too. But if you are, you should help out and deal with the issue of minimum wage.

The issue of access to trades and professions has been mentioned, so I won't belabour that. But it is true that many immigrants bring a great deal of cultural capital that we're not using. We're wasting it in fact. If we only tapped into it, we could use it in those areas where we have desperate shortages, like doctors. Many of the immigrants who come here are doctors but, as I say, you are not tapping into that resource, and you should.

Our strength in this country is our diversity. Diversity is strength. We have a great deal of cultural capital that we should be investing in. We should be investing in those languages that people bring. So many linguistic communities bring a second language and, rather than suppressing it, we should invest. We should invest and support those boards of education that are providing the learning of third languages. We support English and French but we should support third languages as well. Why do we believe that? Because we all support a globalized economy; because this is a global village.

Mr Gregory S. Sorbara (Vaughan-King-Aurora): You don't support a globalized economy.

Mr Marchese: Well, Liberals are strongly supportive of a globalized economy.

I say it is indeed a global village, and in that respect we should be investing in the learning of third languages. Not only is it psychologically good and pedagogically sound but it makes sense economically that we should invest a couple of dollars in those boards of education

that are providing second, third and fourth languages. So I say that our diversity is our strength but we need to put some money into it.

I say to you as well that socially this is one of the most beautiful countries in the world. Where else do you have over 120, 130 different linguistic and racial communities settling than in this country and this province? Where else except in this country?

Mr Sorbara: New York City.

Mr Marchese: New York City is a good, beautiful city too—very global indeed. Canada is equally as beautiful and as great. The day that we begin to cross-culturally marry, as indeed is happening, when the day comes when everyone in this province and this country feels good to marry across cultures, it will indeed be the most beautiful country in the world. And we're getting there.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: I'm saying to you, Minister of Citizenship, that it's happening, and it will in the future. We will see more cross-cultural marriages than ever before. I say that is a beautiful thing we are witnessing in this country.

I know many people on July 1 will celebrate being Canadian, happily celebrating our diversity and pride in being Canadian. I know, Minister of Citizenship, that many across this country and this province will join you in celebrating what we value so much, and that is our diversity as Canadians.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon John R. Baird (Associate Minister of Francophone Affairs): Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion with respect to certain government business and this evening's sitting. Could I read the motion first, if that's possible?

I move that orders G80, G81 and G86 be called immediately; and

That upon the questions being put, if recorded divisions are requested, they be deferred until the routine proceeding "Deferred votes" on Wednesday, June 26, 2002; and

That, notwithstanding the order of the House dated June 24, 2002, when the House adjourns at 6 pm today, it stand adjourned until 1:30 pm on Wednesday, June 26, 2002.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Does the motion carry? Agreed.

HYDRO ONE INC. DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LES ADMINISTRATEURS ET LES DIRIGEANTS DE HYDRO ONE INC.

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 18, 2002, on the motion for second reading of Bill 80, An Act respecting directors and officers of Hydro One Inc. and its subsidiaries / *Projet de loi 80, Loi concernant les*

administrateurs et les dirigeants de Hydro One Inc. et de ses filiales.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 19, 2002, I am now required to put the question.

On June 13, Mr Gilchrist moved second reading of Bill 80. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Pursuant to standing order 28(h), there's been a request that the vote on Bill 80, An Act respecting directors and officers of Hydro One, be deferred until June 26, 2002.

1420

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA GESTION DES ÉLÉMENTS NUTRITIFS

Mrs Johns moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 81, An Act to provide standards with respect to the management of materials containing nutrients used on lands, to provide for the making of regulations with respect to farm animals and lands to which nutrients are applied, and to make related amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 81, Loi prévoyant des normes à l'égard de la gestion des matières contenant des éléments nutritifs utilisées sur les biens-fonds, prévoyant la prise de règlements à l'égard des animaux d'élevage et des biens-fonds sur lesquels des éléments nutritifs sont épandus et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.*

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 20, 2002, I'm now required to put the question.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Pursuant to standing order 28(h), there has been a request to defer the vote, so the vote will be deferred until June 26.

RESCUING CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION ACT, 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LA DÉLIVRANCE DES ENFANTS DE L'EXPLOITATION SEXUELLE

Mr Stockwell, on behalf of Mr Young, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 86, An Act to rescue children trapped in the misery of prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation and to amend the Highway Traffic Act / *Projet de loi 86, Loi visant à délivrer les enfants prisonniers de la*

prostitution et d'autres formes d'exploitation sexuelle et modifiant le Code de la route.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 24, 2002, I'm now required to put the question.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I've been given notice under standing order 28(h) to defer the vote until June 26.

ORAL QUESTIONS

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I have a question to the Minister of Education. Minister, every day now we're getting another example of how your government is failing Ontario's students. We've heard from parents of children with special learning needs whose needs are going unmet. Yesterday we learned that 70% of students in the applied stream did not pass the literacy test, which means you're putting these young people at risk of dropping out.

We continue to learn that board after board is telling you they simply cannot both balance their budget and deliver on their important obligation to ensure that children are having all of their educational needs met. Boards are telling us that more cuts are translating into fewer teachers, fewer psychiatrists, fewer ESL staff and bigger classes. More and more Ontario boards, as you will recognize, are now standing up for students. Ottawa, Toronto and now Hamilton trustees are saying that if they've got to choose, they're putting kids first.

My question to you on behalf of Ontario's students is, when are you going to start to put them first?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): Contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition has stated, we have actually increased each year the funding for students in the province of Ontario. I am pleased to say that this year there was an increase from \$13.86 billion to \$14.26 billion. That is a 2.6% increase on an enrolment growth of only 0.4%.

We have continued to address the needs of students. Our funding formula makes sure that students, no matter where they live, have equal access and receive the same financial support anywhere in the province of Ontario.

Mr McGuinty: Maybe you haven't noticed, Madam Minister, but school board deficits are popping up around this province like mushrooms. London tonight is facing its decision time. The Thames Valley District School Board can either slash \$15 million or not balance their budget. Slashing \$15 million means they're going to lose 12 special-ed teachers, two psychologists and nine speech and language staff. It also means the loss of a special busing program that brings high school students

in from neighbouring rural communities for special-ed programs they can't access in their own communities.

I'm hoping that you're beginning to understand the urgency of the situation here, Madam Minister. Boards, parents and children are looking for a champion of public education. Instead, what they have is somebody who is committed to putting half a billion dollars into private schools.

I am asking you again, why is it you continue to fail Ontario's students?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Once again, the Leader of the Opposition has his facts incorrect. We have not put half a billion dollars into private schools, and he knows full well that we have not done so. However, I am very pleased to say that we have announced in the last few months an additional \$556 million despite the fact that many boards in the province are actually seeing a decrease in enrolment, and that is indeed the case with the Thames Valley District School Board.

Mr McGuinty: Madam Minister, you seem reluctant to admit a couple of things. First of all, you took close to \$2 billion out of public education in Ontario. Secondly, while you may not yet have put half a billion dollars into private schools, you are telling me that commitment of yours is solemn and unwavering. That's the real issue here.

Here's what Hamilton trustee Wes Hicks said last night: "It is time to stand up for the kids. I have seen the deterioration of our schools, staffing reductions, cuts everywhere. This system has taken enough. A balanced budget will hurt our system." What you are doing, Madam Minister, is balancing school board budgets on the backs of our children. I think that is wrong. I think the right thing to do is to ensure all of our children today, especially in a knowledge-based economy, are having all their learning needs met. I ask you again, why is it that you continue to fail Ontario's students?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I can't believe the Leader of the Opposition continues to deny the fact that we have added over half a billion dollars in education spending in the last two months. In fact, if we take a look at the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, we have increased their spending by \$7.5 million, to over \$368 million, an increase of 2.1% based on an enrolment that is expected to decline by 0.1%, and they have \$11.1 million in flexible funding.

I would just remind the Leader of the Opposition that when you were in power between 1985 and 1990, you made a commitment to increase the share of provincial funding to 60%. I regret to say that not only did you not increase it to 60%, but it actually slipped from 46.6% to 44.9%. That's how Liberals keep their promises.

1430

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. Our seniors are not getting the care and the attention they need in your Ontario. They

are not getting the care and attention they need in our long-term-care facilities. Residents in Ontario long-term-care facilities are getting just one bath per week. Last month some 20 angry residents from the Leisureworld facility in North York came to Queen's Park, and each and every one of those 20 said they were only getting one bath a week.

I'm asking you, is this the standard you would have us aspire to for our parents and our grandparents? Do you think it is right that they are entitled to one bath a week?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I think the Associate Minister of Long-Term Care can respond.

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Our government remains committed to ensuring that all residents of long-term-care facilities live in a safe environment and are indeed treated with dignity, respect and the highest level of care.

Our primary concern is for the residents of long-term-care facilities. We take the concerns expressed about compliance very seriously. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's comprehensive long-term-care facility manual sets out the operational requirements for all facilities.

If the Leader of the Opposition has a concern about a compliance issue or with respect to any piece of legislation in the ministry or a regulation pertaining to a long-term-care facility, there are three options he can take: he can launch a complaint with the facility administration; he can launch a complaint with the local community care access centre; or he can launch a complaint with the appropriate regional office of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. All formal complaints will be followed up by one of the 42 compliance advisers within the ministry. Each and every complaint about a long-term-care facility is investigated by ministry staff.

Mr McGuinty: There were 20 parents and grandparents who came here just last month and told you that they're getting only one bath a week.

If you are convicted of first-degree murder today in Ontario and sentenced to 25 years without parole, do you know how many baths you are entitled to? One a day. In a provincial institution, you will also get one bath a day.

I ask you again: do you really believe these are people who broke the rules? I'm talking about our parents and grandparents, who played by all the rules, paid their taxes, raised their families and now find themselves in a position where they need help. Why can you justify a bath a day for a felon but one a week for our parents and grandparents?

Hon Mr Newman: Obviously, we are concerned about any reports suggesting there's a violation of any act pertaining to the ministry or any policies governing long-term-care facilities. That's why the long-term-care facility manual and the acts which govern long-term-care facilities in our province speak to the obligations of a facility to ensure that residents' daily needs and their activities of daily living are met; that means walking, eating, bathing. In fact, section B3.52 of the long-term-

care facility manual states that each resident's hygiene and grooming care shall meet his or her needs and shall consider his or her preferences whenever possible. In other words, should there be a need for increased personal care, the resident care plan would reflect this need and give clear direction to staff accordingly.

Mr McGuinty: Our parents and our grandparents who find themselves in long-term-care facilities today in Ontario find themselves in trouble because you, Mr Minister, and you, Mr Premier, are failing to take an active interest in their welfare. You just can't ride around in your limo and wait for our parents and grandparents, many of whom suffer from dementia, to register some kind of concerns and file some kind of formal complaint that is somehow supposed to trickle up to you before you're going to begin to act.

They're getting one bath a week. You should be ashamed of that. You should be doing whatever you can, breaking down all the barriers. Where the hell is your Red Tape Commission now, when it comes to ensuring our parents and grandparents are getting more than one bath a week?

You've known about this for a long time now. I ask you, Mr Minister: what are you going to do for our parents and grandparents, people who played by all the rules, paid their taxes, raised their families and find themselves in need of care? What are you going to do for them?

Hon Mr Newman: That's why, with long-term-care facilities, we have announced 20,000 new long-term-care beds being built in this province; a \$1.2-billion commitment to our seniors; home care funding up by—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. The member for Kingston and the Islands, come to order, please. Associate Minister?

Hon Mr Newman: Home care funding is up by 70% since 1994-95; nearly \$1.2 billion for community care access centres for home care; a new placement regulation to get seniors who are on waiting lists for long-term-care centres into those facilities quicker; the \$1.2-billion investment with the 20,000 new beds; and in the budget this past week, \$200 million for long-term care. That's going to help with the resident care component as well as with the expansion of the beds.

The member opposite ought to know that in 1995, when his party was the government, there was not one investigation into a long-term-care facility in this province.

HYDRO RATES

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I have a question for the Premier. Yesterday, the Independent Electricity Market Operator said that backup electricity supplies will fall to dangerously low levels in July and August and again from October to December. The Independent Electricity Market Operator warns that higher hydro rates are inevitable as a result.

My question to you, Premier, is, will you stop your hydro deregulation scheme now, before consumers, businesses and industries are hit with electricity shortages and higher hydro prices?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): There is not going to be an electricity shortage and higher and higher prices.

Mr Hampton: Premier, the Independent Electricity Market Operator continues to put out statements telling Ontarians just that, and they're the people who are actually doing the surveys.

Your budget says that you intend to sell off more of our hydro generating stations. That will make the situation worse, because your hydro deregulation scheme lets the most expensive bid accepted to supply hydro set the price. That means that if your corporate friends on Bay Street get their hands on the coal-fired generating stations, they will send hydro rates through the roof.

Premier, again I ask you, before hydro prices go any higher, before we face those shortages of supply, will you stop your hydro privatization and deregulation scheme, before you put Ontario's economy at risk and the personal health of our citizens at risk?

Hon Mr Eves: That is not what the IMO has said at all. They have said that prices are established on market supply and demand. They expect that prices will fluctuate. I'm sure the honourable member is aware that prices are remaining below—even last Sunday, which was the hottest day on record for June 23, the average price was 3.38 cents per kilowatt hour on that date. That is far below the guaranteed price by OPG of 3.8 cents, and far below the disaster that you've been predicting for the last many months. You haven't been right yet.

The reality is, competition in the marketplace does work. It will be fluctuating up and down, obviously, as energy needs go up and down. With respect to shortages, the IMO states that energy production capacity and capability is generally expected to be well above demand levels each month for the outlook period, being the next 18 months.

Mr Hampton: So said spokespersons in California for about eight months.

Today the Ontario Electricity Coalition also released a new poll. The number of people opposed to your dirty deal to privatize our hydro continues to increase. Now more than 72% of Ontarians oppose hydro privatization. That means you're offside with three out of four people in Ontario. You and your Bay Street friends are trying to take people in a direction they don't want to go. Premier, it's a simple question: will you listen to the people of Ontario and stop your dirty deal to sell off our hydro resources?

Hon Mr Eves: There is no dirty deal to sell Hydro One. In fact, we have committed that the government will maintain control of the Hydro One entity.

1440

URBAN ISSUES SUMMIT

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): As you know, there is a Toronto summit happening over the next few days. We heard yesterday from your government spokesperson that your government really doesn't have a position. You don't have anything to take to the summit. We understand the Liberals want to study the problem.

Premier, since you don't have a strategy of your own, let me suggest to you some ideas that we want to put forward. Since you have downloaded the cost of social housing without any revenue, since you have downloaded many of the costs of urban transportation, and transportation in general, without any revenue, how about transferring part of the land transfer tax? How about providing some of the gasoline tax to municipalities so they can get to work dealing with issues like affordable housing and urban transit? Would you do that, Premier?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I'm sure the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who is attending the summit, would like to respond.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): The minister of urban affairs is also going to be at the summit. We welcome these ideas, this exchange of ideas. I'm looking forward to new ideas that come out of the summit. I would like to say that the third party has been interested in urban issues for a long time. I've read their suggestions. At least they put them on paper. The Liberals want to study it, like you've said in your preamble. I'm looking forward to seeing their ideas.

We've also set up, as you know, a growth panel chaired by Hazel McCallion, because Toronto fits into a larger region, and it's always been the province's historic position to make sure Toronto remains strong and to work with our partners.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary? The member for Beaches-East York.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): I thank you for having read our urban vision, Mr Minister. In that urban vision, we have addressed affordable housing as one of the key components. However, the deal you have signed with the federal government you've done on the backs of the municipalities, on the backs of the churches, on the backs of the charities. You have contributed as a province and as a government almost nothing toward the monies for affordable housing.

We believe we can build some 8,000 units in Ontario of affordable housing and another 1,800 of supportive housing for the homeless on our streets by dedicating part of the land transfer tax. Why not commit yourself to a real deal by giving cities the money from the land transfer tax so that they can build the affordable housing and so that our homeless can get off the streets?

Interjections.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I'm not sure—it's so noisy in here, I couldn't hear the question. I could ascertain, by the thumping across, that he was talking about affordable housing. For this member to ask a question on affordable housing really pushes the envelope in terms of nerve. Did you ever figure out with your special tax on multi-res apartments in Toronto, where you raised the tax rate four times, what it is if you paid for a condo versus an apartment? It works out to over \$200 an apartment unit. You went out of your way to vote for that. Have you ever counted how many people you threw out of their apartment or denied the opportunity to have affordable housing because of your actions when you were on council?

HOME CARE

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Health. Three weeks ago, you had the opportunity to meet Marlo Leatham and her family. Marlo, as you will remember, is a 13-year-old—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. We'll let the member speak. The leader of the official opposition has the floor now. You can start over. I apologize to the leader of the official opposition.

Mr McGuinty: To the Minister of Health, a few weeks ago, in fact three weeks to the day, you were introduced to Marlo Leatham, a 13-year-old London girl who has cerebral palsy and suffers from spastic quadriplegia. As you know, she can't walk, she can't dress herself, she can't even roll over. You cut her home care to 15 hours a week from the original of 54. Her parents came all the way to Queen's Park, looking to you for help. You assured them that within some 24 to 72 hours you would have an answer for them when it came to long-term help. The House is rising in two days. The Leathams wrote to you some 18 months ago. They have spent \$10,000 on lawyers' fees, going through an appeal process. They're now looking to you.

I need an answer on behalf of the Leathams today. I need your assurance by the end of this day, Minister. You told them 72 hours some three weeks ago; it's now been three weeks. They need an answer today. I need your commitment, sir, that you will provide an answer to the Leathams with respect to their need for Marlo for long-term help.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I can inform this House that since this issue was last raised in the Legislature, we have had a short-term solution as a post-operative period for the individual involved. Certainly discussions are ongoing for the longer-term solution, but for the next several weeks, there is a short-term solution, which is now being used to deal with the short-term issues as we work out a longer-term solution.

Mr McGuinty: Minister, I'm going to be blunt with you: the Leathams do not trust you. Their short-term solution, as you call it, is up in some two weeks. The

House is going to rise in some two days. They are concerned you're going to renege on your commitment. They've asked me to ask you to give them a commitment today, by the end of the day. After all, as I just said a few moments ago, they wrote to you some 18 months ago and you did nothing. They spent \$10,000 on lawyers—not on home care—trying to appeal your process. They had to come here to meet with you to try to embarrass you into doing something. You gave them an assurance you would fix this within some 24 to 72 hours. It's been three weeks.

I'm asking you again, on behalf of the Leatham family, can you agree that you will, by the end of the day today, come up with some long-term solution for Marlo Leatham?

Hon Mr Clement: I'm heartened that the honourable member acknowledged in his supplementary question that in fact we have a short-term solution that carries the family through for the four weeks after the operation, which he did not include in his opening question.

Having said that, I will repeat for the honourable member's edification and, more importantly, for this House that in fact we do have, as I say, a multi-week, a four-week, solution that is in place that was put in place, I would say, fairly quickly and to the satisfaction of the family. I'm not trying to speak on their behalf, but that was what I was led to believe. Certainly we, in the intervening days we have left, are working on the long-term solution. That's all I'm prepared to say at this time.

BIG TICKET LOTTERY

Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Attorney General. Two weeks ago, Attorney General, I brought to your attention the matter of the Big Ticket Lottery. The concern was that the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp was effectively in competition with charities in this province. You undertook to meet with representatives of the lotteries at that time. I predicted to the House that, in your good wisdom, you would then take the steps and direct the lottery corporation to get out of this business and to stop competing with charities, who are having a difficult enough time as it is.

Can you confirm for us today what steps you are taking, and that you, in fact, have given direction for the lottery corporation to get out of this business?

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I thank the member for bringing this matter forward, not just today, but as he has in the House previously and as he has informally on many occasions.

As the member—

Applause.

Hon Mr Young: Yes, I think applause is in order.

As the member indicated, I did have an opportunity to meet with a number of the charities involved. I met with the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Canadian Cancer Society and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

Perhaps more importantly, what I did was I listened. I listened and I considered what they had to say. I considered the fact they were concerned that the operation of the Big Ticket Lottery was in some way, shape or form interfering with their own fundraising efforts. As a result of that and after conferring with many of my colleagues, the OLG and my predecessor, Minister Hudak, a decision was made to not continue the Big Ticket Lottery.

Mr Klees: I want to commend the Attorney General first of all for listening, and second and most important, for taking the action he did.

Attorney General, I'm pleased, as I'm sure all charities in this province are, at the action you've taken. What concerns me is tomorrow, the next day and the next time a creative idea comes out of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp that may well once again put them into competition with charities.

Can you tell us what steps you're taking to ensure that this type of competition will not come against our charities in this province again?

Hon Mr Young: Indeed, what we have done is we have established a dialogue with these very important institutions and organizations. I want to say to you, on behalf of the Ernie Eves government, we support their efforts. They perform very important work in our society, they help individuals who are in many respects the most vulnerable individuals who have health challenges, and we as a government are there to assist them because, indeed, they are assisting Ontarians.

We have established a dialogue with them. We have indicated to them we will continue to discuss these sorts of matters with them before any decisions are made. Indeed, one has to remember that in this area, the area of gaming, there needs to be an appropriate balance. One has to balance the proceeds that come from the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. Some 90% of those proceeds go to hospitals across this province and to community groups. That obviously performs an important service for the people of Ontario. At the same time, we must be respectful and respective of the charities involved.

1450

PICKERING NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is for the Minister of Energy and it is about the Pickering A nuclear plant restart. It's months behind schedule, with \$1.5 billion in overruns. What happened, and what have you been doing to fix it?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I was meeting with the chair of the OPG just last week discussing exactly that issue. Yes, it is months behind schedule and it's over budget. It's unacceptable. He outlined some issues that he found concerning that they've addressed with respect to putting it on the right footing and getting it in in a reasonable length of time and within the budget now that has been allocated. I can tell you that they are

cognisant and very aware of the situation. They had some difficulties, and after the meeting with the chair of the OPG, he's given me an undertaking that it will come in on time with the new schedule and that the budget will be met.

Mr Bryant: As a result of the failure to get Pickering A started up on time, we have what the IMO electricity referee has called reduced reserve levels. As a result of the reduced reserved levels, the IMO says—these are my words—that there will be an upward pressure on market prices. So as a result of your government's failure to get Pickering A started on time, electricity bills will be higher than they would have otherwise been had the government done its job on the Pickering A refurbishment.

When the Provincial Auditor brought this to your attention on June 6, you said, "No, the prices will not go up." Will you admit now that you were wrong to say that and that the IMO has in fact confirmed the Provincial Auditor's assessment? And will you take responsibility for the prices going up as a result of the Pickering A nuclear failure that took place as a result of something the Ministry of Energy did wrong?

Hon Mr Stockwell: I won't admit that, because that's not accurate. The fact is, if you read the entire annual report, it states very clearly that the IMO does not expect electricity shortages in the province at any time during the 18-month period or beyond. The IMO states that the energy production capability is generally expected to be well above energy demand levels in the outlook period, which is 18 months. Prices will fluctuate, they suggest, as the weather heats up and the market demand goes up and down. We've never denied that. The IMO has also said with their outlook forecast that they have precluded, they've excluded, the Pickering plant. They've always said that we have a supply of energy that's sufficient. So I won't admit that, because it's not accurate.

I understand what you're pointing to, but you've got to read the whole report. The whole report finally comes down to the fact that the IMO said there will be no electricity shortages; they do not expect electricity shortages in the 18-month period. Reserves are slightly lower than they were in the April 2002 supply adequacy report, and prices will fluctuate depending on the weather. You can't take selective passages. What you have to do is, when you open the report you start on page 1 and you have to read it all. You know when you're finished? When you take the last page and close it and there's nothing left to read.

FIRE MARSHAL'S GUIDELINE

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): My question is for the Minister of Public Safety and Security. I know you've heard from a number of concerned members on this side of the House about a new guideline issued by the Ontario fire marshal. The guideline recommends to municipalities that 10 firefighters be on the scene of a fire within 10 minutes of a call 90% of the time.

I've held a number of meetings with people in my constituency—firefighters, municipal officials and others—about the difficulties in implementing this guideline. For small communities, and in particular large rural constituencies like my own, the 10 in 10 guideline is unrealistic. Fire safety is definitely a priority for my community, but government solutions must take into account differences in municipal resources. Many of our municipal partners feel this guideline does not do that. I understand that the fire marshal operates at arm's length from the government but, Minister, how are municipalities to interpret the fire marshal's guideline?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): I want to thank the member for Peterborough for raising the issue. We have discussed this as well with a number of other government members who've brought this to my attention. In my first meeting with the fire marshal, this issue was raised and I was assured that it was strictly a guideline and that municipalities should not be concerned about its implications. But I think it's fair to say the concern continues to grow and, based on that, I asked the fire marshal to issue a clarification, which was done a week to 10 days ago, which was circulated to all municipalities explaining that this was a guideline and not a requirement. But I gather concern is still alive and well, and we are attempting to address it.

Mr Stewart: Minister, I appreciate that you have been willing to listen to the concerns that I and other caucus members have brought forward on this issue. But what about implementation? Does it adequately account for the differences between rural and urban, large municipalities and small, and what about the risks? I understand that in the US they have a program for urban and a different one for rural areas.

Minister, now that the fire marshal has issued a formal communiqué, aren't our fire safety partners at risk of being held legally responsible for not adhering to the minister's guidelines?

Hon Mr Runciman: I think that is the major concern of municipalities, especially small rural and large rural municipalities, with respect to liability. That has been raised with officials in the ministry and they have assured me that this does in no way, shape or form put municipalities in the situation where they're facing additional liabilities.

I have to say that the member and I discussed the issue of other jurisdictions having varying guidelines, depending upon the size of the municipality, the population, the nature of the volunteer or full-time fire service. We will be pursuing that issue to see if we can have those kinds of distinctions recognizing the differences in municipalities.

PRIVATE HEALTH CARE SERVICES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): My question is to the Premier. Premier, last week you refused to reconsider your plan for more for-profit health care delivery in

Ontario, and New Democrats believe this will come at the expense of patient care because dollars that should go completely into patient care end up being diverted into profits.

We understand that in the last seven months your current chief of staff was a paid lobbyist for a for-profit health care corporation. Steve Pengelly worked for Endopis Medical Inc, lobbying for hospitals, privatization and outsourcing. We wonder if this company has any relation to Endopis Medical Imaging Clinics, located at the same address.

Premier, does your decision to establish private MRI and CAT scan clinics have anything to do with your office's ties to for-profit health care corporations?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I don't have any ties to private sector, for-profit health care clinics, and anything the government is doing with respect to providing more diagnostic or treatment procedures available to the public is to increase accessibility.

If you will note, in the budget—and the Minister of Health has indicated it several times since—we are looking at putting MRIs and other diagnostic procedures in private facilities that already exist for other purposes. That is where we are looking at expanding the number of procedures that are available to the people in Ontario to make it more accessible.

Ms Martel: Premier, if I might, your connections to the for-profit health sector don't stop there. Before she rejoined your staff, Kristina Filmer, who is now senior adviser to your chief of staff, was a lobbyist for Canadian Radiation Oncology Services, the for-profit cancer clinic which is located at Sunnybrook. Charles Harnick, former Conservative cabinet minister, is registered as a lobbyist for the same for-profit company. This is the same for-profit clinic that the Provincial Auditor noted as being paid \$500 more per case than is being paid in the public cancer centre. It's also the same for-profit clinic that Mr McGuinty told the Toronto Sun in May 2002 he would maintain if elected. It's the same for-profit company whose contract the government quietly renewed in March 2002.

Premier, my question: who else on your staff has ties to companies which might benefit from your decision to further expand for-profit health care in Ontario?

Hon Mr Eves: With respect to any private clinic delivering any service in the province of Ontario, the member surely knows that about 35% of the health care delivered in the public health care system today is delivered by private-sector clinics. It is delivered for the reason that they can improve accessibility for the public to different diagnostic and treatment procedures like kidney dialysis and like diagnostic procedures of imaging that allow the patient to detect sooner what problems they may or may not have.

I was in Kitchener yesterday, where we are opening at the Grand River Hospital an MRI situation that will allow some 3,300 patients a year to receive MRIs who are not.

There has to be a mix and a blend of whatever facility can best provide more accessibility within the confines of a publicly funded health care system. We will do what we can to improve accessibility of the public to health care.

1500

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Premier. Ontarians, as you know, want to know what happened in September 1995 in the shooting death of Dudley George at Ipperwash Provincial Park. You will know the park is still closed. This is an open wound that won't heal unless there's a public inquiry. There is a civil case by the George family, although they do not prefer that approach. They would drop the civil case in a moment if you would call a public inquiry.

Former Premier Harris has spent about \$1 million of taxpayers' money so far on his legal defence, and the estimate is that he may very well spend another \$1 million on his defence. There's another group of government people who are also being defended through the government's insurance company. We have been trying to find out how much money has been spent there, and what the government has said is that if they disclosed that, it would have a chilling effect on the government's insurer.

The question is this: will you agree, Premier, to call a public inquiry into the events surrounding the shooting death at Ipperwash Provincial Park?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I refer this to the AG, Mr Speaker.

Hon David Young (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Indeed, this is a serious matter. An individual lost his life as a result of the incident referenced by the member opposite. It is so serious a matter that it has been the subject matter of not one, not two, but three court proceedings. It was a matter where indeed an individual was convicted of a very serious charge, and there was another individual who was acquitted.

This is not a matter that anybody is trying to remove from public attention. This is a matter where we are trying to get to the truth; we are trying to ensure that all of the facts are brought forward. Indeed, to that end we have co-operated fully with the pending civil action. We have asked that the matter be expedited. A case management judge has been appointed and is moving this action forward so that all of the people of Ontario can get all of the facts.

Mr Phillips: Premier, I would hope you might address this personally. You are a lawyer, and lawyers understand that the civil case may determine who might have been legally responsible but it will not get at many of the essential issues in this case: whether the procedures were adequate; the relationship between the government and the OPP; the short- and long-term causes of what hap-

pened that might have led to that incident; the preventive measures.

It is crystal clear to any lawyer I've talked to that the civil case will not get the answers to the essential questions. So I would say to you that Mr Harris will spend another \$1 million of taxpayers' money, the other millions of dollars will be spent on legal fees defending the civil case, and at the end of that Ontario will still not have the answer to the questions. I say to you again, Premier, the time is now, is right, before the summer recess. Will you now agree to do the appropriate thing, to stop the civil case, allow the George family to drop it, by calling a public inquiry?

Hon Mr Young: Indeed, it is the George family that commenced the civil action. They did so by filing a statement of claim with the Superior Court of Justice in this province. In that statement of claim they set out the parameters of the lawsuit, as does any plaintiff at the commencement of a lawsuit. They set out the issues that were to be dealt with, and they will be dealt with.

I would ask you for a moment to pause and consider the difference between a civil action and a public inquiry of the sort referenced by the member opposite. In a civil action, the judge is free, open and indeed obliged to find fault and assess damages. In a public inquiry, there can be no such finding. The judge or whoever the individual is who is put in charge of that inquiry is restricted as to what he or she can do. So if we are looking for the best vehicle to provide as many answers as possible, the civil action is the most appropriate vehicle to utilize.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): My question is to the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Minister, you're very familiar with my riding of Durham, and you would know perhaps that municipal agricultural advisory committees and other constituents of mine have been inquiring recently about the status of our Nutrient Management Act. I'll mention them later. Recently, I am pleased to say, it received second reading and in fact I'm confident, with the endurance of our House leader, and you, as minister, it will pass here tomorrow.

Last week, however, the opposition member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, Mr Lalonde, introduced a private member's bill to control what he called megahog farms. I've never actually seen a megahog farm, but nonetheless I understand this proposed act pertains to operations with a large amount of livestock. It would classify them—and this is important—as industrial and not normal farm practices.

Minister, this appears to be another Liberal way, a Liberal solution to a very complex problem of managing on-farm nutrients. What is your opinion of this opposition bill that you're dealing with as the Minister of Agriculture and Food?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I'd like to thank my colleague for the question and say that I too was surprised that this bill was introduced by

the opposition Liberals. It is the opinion on this side of the House that all of these issues are taken into account and covered under Bill 81, and we find it somewhat narrow to say that we should only look at hogs in the province as opposed to all livestock in the province. We're attempting to look at all livestock when we talk about the nutrient management bill.

The proposed bill focuses only on hogs. It doesn't cover other farming operations. We're very concerned, and so is Justice O'Connor, when you say you're focusing only on one area. In fact, in Justice O'Connor's report, on page 138, he says that Bill 81 is an excellent vehicle to move forward so that we can manage nutrients in the province. What he doesn't want to happen is that there be one-offs with the agricultural community; that people are treated fairly and equally across the province. So I am saddened that this bill would be put forward in—

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

Mr O'Toole: Mr Speaker, I wish you had given her more time. She was really getting into the substance of the answer.

I understand it's a very incomplete, ill-thought-out bill, and I appreciate the work you've put into this. In fact, I want to pay my respects and wish you good luck at the first ministers' meetings in Halifax this weekend, giving up your personal time etc. I also want to thank my colleagues Ernie Hardeman and Brian Coburn for the work they did on this very important, very complete bill, when they were ministers.

Since we're speaking of hog production, I want to mention a few of my riding people who are involved in the agricultural sector. I know members here would like to know about them. They are interested in the outcome of Bill 81. Ken Lamb is the president of the Durham Pork Producers. Other producers include Dave and Leah Frew, Steve Pleasance, John and Jacquie Vaneyk, Stan Found, Craig Larmer and Jim Macklin, just to name a few. Can you assure not just these but all of my constituents in my riding, particularly in the agricultural business, that Bill 81 will be passed this spring and you can get on with preparing the regulations so that they can get on with business and agriculture?

Hon Mrs Johns: I'd like to thank the member once again for the question and say that we on this side are certainly hopeful that this bill will pass. We know we will have the final vote tomorrow, and we're optimistic that at the end of the day we can say the bill has gone forward. We certainly need to work in this summer session to get regulations ready so that we can start to consult with the public.

I do want to say that this has been a really long haul. If the Liberals wanted to have a nutrient management bill passed so badly, they could have passed it a long time ago. They voted against it today, and I hope tomorrow they'll change their minds, that they will flip-flop and vote for this bill. If you want to vote for the bill you put on the table, you have to vote for ours. It's the same thing only broader.

1510

HYDRO DAM SAFETY

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): My question is to the Minister of Energy. The minister will know that on Sunday afternoon on the Madawaska River, just down from the village of Calabogie, a terrible and terrifying tragedy occurred that claimed the lives of a young mother and her young son who were constituents of mine. The tragedy occurred as the result of an unexpected release of a very substantial volume of water from one of Ontario Power Generation's hydroelectric stations along that part of the Madawaska River corridor. Minister, it has been 48 hours since the tragedy occurred. Could you please tell my constituents living in the Calabogie area and the Legislature what, to the best of your understanding at this point in time, occurred on that river Sunday afternoon?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): I want to thank the member opposite for the question. When I found out on Sunday, I did my best to try and inform the local member; I think we reached you later that day.

Cindy Cadieux and her nine-year-old son Aaron were killed on Sunday, June 23, by a rush of water from the Barrett Chute dam. It was a very serious thing that took place and I know this whole House will send its condolences and sorrow to the family. It's a tragedy that I'm sure we all feel.

The Ontario Provincial Police, the local coroner's office and Ontario Power Generation are investigating the tragic accident. I understand from the OPG that they are fully co-operating. In fact, I directed them to fully co-operate with the investigation. We'll take whatever action is necessary to ensure safety around the dam sites, at Madawaska and the other sites across Ontario.

It's an awful thing. It's a terrible, terrible thing. I know your community of Renfrew is seized with this issue. I think all in the House would like to allow the police to investigate and determine what happened, what went wrong, and then maybe we can comment and deal with the issue after the fact.

Again, it was a tragedy and we extend our sincere condolences to the family.

Mr Conway: I appreciate the minister's response and I know my constituents will appreciate his concern and his sympathy. It was a truly terrifying thing that occurred on that brilliant early summer afternoon in the Calabogie area.

My supplementary question is this: in my constituency of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke there are several other hydroelectric generating stations. Across the province there are scores of these stations. Could the minister tell me what he, his department, his government and all of the hydroelectric generators in the province are doing to ensure the maximum level of public safety so that an incident such as we saw, tragically, at Calabogie on Sunday does not occur again?

Hon Mr Stockwell: On Monday morning, after getting to the office, I had my staff phone the OPG and others and directed all such operations to be reviewed, with the OPG staff going out there to review all procedures that are put in place to ensure that at least in the meantime nothing like this will take place.

You're right, there are a number of these facilities around Ontario. It's a big job, but they have undertaken to do just that. The member made the request of me and I followed up on it exactly as you said. The important fact now is that we try and ensure that with any of these other sites, if they're handling the situation the same way, they stop. I think that was the order I put out. I know that was the order I put out to my staff. I know that's the order that was given to the OPG. It was also the order to completely co-operate with the OPP, but also, obviously, we should talk about all the other sites and ensure they don't handle it in the same fashion.

All I can say to the House right now is that after the investigation we'll review further, but the directions were put out, notices have been sent and the OPG staff are inspecting to ensure that in the meantime it doesn't happen again.

HMCS HAIDA

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Recreation. There has been discussion between this government and the federal government, Parks Canada and the Friends of HMCS Haida that the Haida may be relocated. Can you give us an update on HMCS Haida and its future, and in particular the transfer of the Haida to Parks Canada?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): I realize all members of the House are waiting to hear this year's update on the Haida. As all members would know, this is probably the most decorated and distinguished vessel in Canadian naval history and it's important we preserve this important ship for future generations.

Three years ago we started discussions with Sheila Copps and her ministry—three years ago—to relocate it to a permanent location in Hamilton. I'm pleased to tell the House that we have an agreement in principle that we will be able to effect the transfer of this important heritage property.

Friends of HMCS Haida—which includes everyone in this House, I understand—are very excited about our opportunity to preserve this important historical site and to improve its presentation for future generations. It's going to build an outstanding tourism product for Hamilton.

Mr Gill: Minister, thank you for enlightening us. It is heartening that the province appreciates the historical significance of the Haida and its naval experience, beginning with its wartime duty and, later, participating as part of the United Nations's first peacekeeping operation in Korea.

What are the next steps for the transfer of HMCS Haida to Parks Canada?

Hon Mr Jackson: I want to thank the honourable member. This is a great example of how the federal and provincial governments can work together. The province is pleased to put up a quarter of a million dollars in a one-time grant to ensure that we can move the ship safely from Ontario Place. We will have some restoration work to do at the waterfront at Ontario Place. We will tow it to Welland port, where it will have important repairs so that it will arrive in Hamilton safely. We want to make sure the federal government and the provincial government ensure that the transfer occurs effectively.

This is the last summer the Haida will be at Ontario Place. I encourage you to go and see it and enjoy Ontario Place.

If I may, Mr Speaker, on Canada Day at 10 o'clock at night we will have a world-class fireworks display set to Canadian music. We encourage all members of the House and those listening to come to Ontario Place on Monday to celebrate Canada Day.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): My question is to the Deputy Premier and Minister of Education. You would know, as my good friend and colleague from Hamilton West had indicated, that the Ottawa board and now the Hamilton board have had to make decisions as a result of your shortfall in the funding formula that funds education, through those boards, to the kids. In their cases, they have basically decided that they're going to run deficits rather than taking services away from those kids.

In my community, our public English board has been put in a position of having a \$4.8-million shortfall this upcoming budget year. As a result of that, they've decided to cut \$930,000 from the special-needs budget. That means 25% of the education assistants are going to be let go next year. There are now some 650 kids in our school board area, within that board, who are going to be without services next year.

What are you prepared to do to assist those kids to make sure they get the services they need so they can compete in the future?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): I certainly appreciate the concerns the member has brought to my attention regarding the pupils within his constituency, but as the member does know, we have responded to the concerns and, certainly, the additional money has flowed to school boards. We have added about \$556 million this year, in the last few months. I would also hasten to add that school boards have seen an increase in their flexible funding from \$100 per student to \$200 per student, so they do have the flexibility to direct the money where it's most needed. We've also taken into account small school boards with declining enrolment, and, again, they continue to be allocated additional money.

Mr Bisson: Minister, the problem is, all of that does absolutely nothing to help kids next year. The boards are making these decisions based on what they know the numbers are, as you announced in the budget. So those numbers aren't going to assist those 650 kids within the public board who are going to have to do without those particular services. Now you have a separate process going on, when it comes to a consultation process to take a look at the funding formula. But my problem there is, that decision won't be made until later on this fall, which means it will not be implemented until next spring, should there be an increase in the special-needs budgets.

So my plea to you is a very simple one. We know there's a process that is undertaken to revisit the issue of the funding formula. My question to you is, are you prepared to fund adequately the dollars for school boards across this province, and specifically for the area I represent, so that those kids who need special-needs education aren't going to have to do without because of the shortfall in your funding formula?

Hon Mrs Witmer: The member opposite obviously didn't hear the response to his first question or he was anticipating that I would give a different response. I think he's talking about the Rozanski report, which I didn't mention in my first response. But I did tell the member opposite that we have responded. We have announced funding of 556 million additional dollars this year. We have increased flexible funding for school boards from \$100 to \$200 per pupil. We have given additional money to small school boards, recognizing that there is a need to recognize that there are some extenuating circumstances. We certainly are moving forward in a way that responds to the requests we have heard from school boards to provide them with additional money and more flexible funding and we have done so.

1520

SUPPORT FOR AGRICULTURE

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): My question is to the Minister of Agriculture. The federal government has announced how much they're coming to the table with. Will you today announce to this Legislature and Ontario farmers what contribution the Ontario government is going to make toward safety nets?

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Let me say that I appreciate the question asked, because the agricultural community in Ontario is a very important industry. The agri-food industry is the second-largest industry in the province.

Last week the federal government introduced a plan. Inasmuch as we're grateful for the fact that they came forward with dollars, it's a little shy on details. We have worked with the federal government over the weekend to be able to ascertain the kinds of dollars the federal government is talking about. Once we get that information, we will be talking about that.

As a result of the information we had gleaned, we met with the agricultural community on Monday morning. We've all gone away to work on the details to be able to come together again and have a discussion of where the province may go. It's our goal to work with the agricultural community to ensure that we do the best things for the agricultural community as we proceed forward in the ensuing weeks. Details are what we need before we're going to make a commitment about what we're going—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I thank the minister. Supplementary?

Mr Peters: It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that the Ontario agricultural community will receive approximately 21% of the federal dollars that are allocated. There's a tradition in this country of cost sharing, a 40-60 split. I know that you have some difficulties with it. But we heard the previous Minister of Agriculture, Ernie Hardeman, say that we've had this tradition, this 40-60 split.

We've waited. We've been waiting for over a year for the made-in-Ontario safety net program. We've been through one minister; we're into another minister. We heard at the agricultural round table that the Premier is hoping to have something in place by the fall. The farmers of Ontario can't wait until the fall.

Madam Minister, the farmers of Ontario are asking you to stand up and show some leadership. When will we see what the Ontario contribution is going to be? And when will those cheques start to flow to Ontario farmers, those farmers who have been hurt by bad crops, bad weather, those farmers who have been hurt by subsidies from the European Union, from the United States? When are you going to stand up, Minister, and deliver a clear message to Ontario farmers that you care about this government, that you don't pay lip service to them? When, Minister, will we hear that announcement?

Hon Mrs Johns: What a bunch of bunk and bluster. He knows as well as every farmer in the province knows that last year Ontario put up their 40%, plus they put up \$20 million extra that was never matched by the Liberals in Ottawa. We've come forward. We've been there for the agricultural community. In fact, when I was made minister in April I went to Minister Vanclief and said, "I think we should move forward on this." He is moving forward. He's going to give me the details. We're going to consult with the agricultural community, because that's what we do on this side of the House. Past history tells us that when it comes to supporting farmers, this side of the House does it.

What happened of course is that the federal government refuses to take responsibility for the trade injury they have incurred because they refused to be strong at the WTO talks. Saskatchewan has raised strong arguments on this, but we have never said we'll walk away from our 40%. The commitment has been—

The Speaker: The minister's time is up.

PETITIONS

CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I am pleased to present a petition that has been signed by 16,561 residents of eastern Ontario, which reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government is shutting down the heart surgery unit at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the closure of this program will restrict the accessibility to life-saving surgery for children in eastern Ontario; and

"Whereas every year CHEO treats 140 cases of seriously ill children close to home; and

"Whereas centralizing children's heart surgery in Toronto will force patients and their families to travel 400 to 600 kilometres away from home at a traumatic time; and

"Whereas there is a waiting list for cardiac surgery in Toronto but not at CHEO; and

"Whereas the people of eastern Ontario demand accessible, quality health care for their children;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately override the government's decision to close this life-saving program and to ensure that top-quality accessible health care remains available to every child in eastern Ontario."

HEALTH CARE

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): There are a lot of people around me here just now and I have the page Mackenzie—where are you from, Mackenzie? Anyway, it's an excellent petition. Actually, Mackenzie's from Peterborough.

"Whereas we, the undersigned, wish to express our concern about the current debate on our health care system; and

"Whereas medicare has saved a generation of Canadians from fear of financial ruin due to illness; and

"Whereas this system is now in peril;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to work co-operatively to uphold the five principles of the Canada Health Act which are in need of reinforcement and new commitment. These principles are: accessible, universally available, publicly administered, portable and comprehensive. We further ask that Canadians be provided with a properly funded and sustainable not-for profit health system. We ask that Canada take back its role as a leader in national health care, insured by a public health system fully supported by the federal and provincial governments."

I support this petition and I can only hope the federal government supports health care.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough-Rouge River): I have a petition here that reads:

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Because we, the undersigned, believe in our responsibility as teachers to maintain a high degree of professionalism; and

"Because such professionalism is best served when professional learning is self-directed and based on teacher need, improves professional skills, improves student learning, is based on best practice accountability and is funded by the appropriate educational authority; and

"Because we oppose the government's teacher testing program and the College of Teachers' professional learning program because they do not meet the objectives of effective professional learning,

"We, the undersigned, respectfully request that you repeal all clauses and references to professional learning from the Stability and Excellence in Education Act, 2001."

I affix my signature to this and I'll be sure to give it to Lauren to give to the desk.

HIGHWAY 522

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

"We, the taxpayers, members of the communities and the people who have to travel along Highway 522 in the district of Parry Sound want to bring to your attention the poor condition of Highway 522."

I sign my name in support of this petition.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

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

"Whereas the federal government of Canada has given a yearly increase in disability pensions geared to inflation, and the Ontario government, through the disability support program, has clawed this amount back;

"Therefore, we, the undersigned people of Ontario, petition the Ontario Legislature to remove the cap on the disability support program."

I have the signatures on this petition of a large number of people from the community of Dryden, and I affix my signature in full agreement with their concerns.

1530

HEALTH CARE

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I'm receiving thousands of these petitions and I support most of them.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the undersigned, wish to express our concern about the current debate on our health care system; and

"Whereas medicare has saved a generation of Canadians from fear of financial ruin due to illness; and

"Whereas this system is now in peril;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to work co-operatively to uphold the five principles of the Canada Health Act which are in need of reinforcement and new commitment. These principles are: accessible, universally available, publicly administered, portable, comprehensive. We further ask that Canadians be provided with a properly funded and sustainable non-for-profit health care system. We ask that Canada take back its role as a leader in national health care, insured by a public health system fully supported by the federal and provincial governments."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of Elizabeth Bateman, who brought this into my office.

DOCTOR SHORTAGE

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): I'm pleased to present a petition today for the provision of family doctors for the residents of Kirkland Lake.

"Whereas we, the residents of Kirkland Lake and areas are facing a critical shortage of family physicians and urge the government to provide prompt implementation of measures to ease this inadequacy;

"Whereas patients deserve to have a family physician with whom they can build a trusting relationship, someone who knows them by name, can provide routine personal care and keep track of them in the health care system. This cannot and should not be provided in an emergency department setting;

"Whereas as taxpaying citizens we are being denied access to primary health care and urge you to deliver relief for the people of this community and our remaining doctors struggling to maintain medical services;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

"To demand the Conservative government draw immediate attention to this potentially life-threatening crisis and provide relief to us, the people of Ontario."

I will affix my signature to this.

HEALTH CARE

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the undersigned, wish to express our concern about the current debate on our health care system; and

"Whereas medicare has saved a generation of Canadians from fear of financial ruin due to illness; and

"Whereas this system is now in peril;"

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to work co-operatively to

uphold the five principles of the Canada Health Act which are in need of reinforcement and new commitment. These principles are: accessible, universally available, publicly administered, portable, comprehensive. We further ask that Canadians be provided with a properly funded and sustainable non-for-profit health system. We ask that Canada take back its role as a leader in national health care, insured by a public health system fully supported by the federal and provincial governments."

I'll sign this.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE SERVICES

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas all children five years and older who have been identified as children with speech and language problems have the right to receive professional speech assistance,

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

"To ensure adequate speech professionals are available to assist children five years and older;

"Therefore, we ask the Legislature begin immediate action in providing speech and language services required."

I've also signed the petition.

HEALTH CARE

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I feel it's important to acknowledge the work constituents do, and I do on their behalf. I'm presenting this petition. This one was brought in from Mary Lynch, who is a parish nurse:

"Whereas we, the undersigned, wish to express our concern about the current debate on our health care system; and

"Whereas medicare has saved a generation of Canadians from fear of financial ruin due to illness; and

"Whereas this system is now in peril;"

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to work co-operatively to uphold the five principles of the Canada Health Act which are in need of reinforcement and new commitment. These principles are: accessible, universally available, publicly administered, portable, comprehensive. We further ask that Canadians be provided with a properly funded and sustainable non-for-profit health care system. We ask that Canada take back its role as a leader in national health care, insured by a public health system fully supported by the federal and provincial governments."

I'm pleased to sign and endorse this on behalf of a number of constituents, and I'll be reading these further.

AIR QUALITY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Eves government’s wholly owned Nanticoke generating station is North America’s largest dirty coal-fired electricity producing plant and Ontario’s largest producer of the chemicals and acid gases which contribute to deadly smog and acid rain; and

“Whereas the Nanticoke plant, which has more than doubled its dangerous emissions under the Harris government, is now the worst air polluter in all of Canada, spewing out over five million kilograms of toxic chemicals each year, including many cancer-causing chemicals and mercury, a potent and dangerous neurotoxin; and

“Whereas the Ontario Medical Association has stated that 1,900 Ontarians die prematurely each year and we pay \$1 billion annually in health-related costs as a result of air pollution; and

“Whereas the Eves government has the opportunity to make a positive move on behalf of the environment by proceeding with the Sir Adam Beck 3 generating facility, which would produce air-pollution-free electricity in this province and would provide an alternative to the constantly increasing demands placed upon the Nanticoke coal facility; and

“Whereas the Beck 3 generating facility would also provide a major boost to the economy of Ontario through investment and employment in the construction and operation of the facility and in addition would offer additional energy for the power grid of the province of Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, ask that the Ernie Eves government, as shareholder of Ontario Power Generation, order the immediate development and construction of the Sir Adam Beck 3 generating station.”

I affix my signature. I am in complete agreement.

HEALTH CARE

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Petitions? The member for Durham.

Mr John O’Toole (Durham): Mr Speaker, thank you for recognizing me and giving me an opportunity to represent my constituents in Durham, because this is a very important issue.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we, the undersigned, wish to express our concern about the current debate on our health care system; and

“Whereas medicare has saved a generation of Canadians from fear of financial ruin due to illness; and

“Whereas this system is now in peril,

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to work co-operatively to uphold the five principles of the Canada Health Act which are in need of reinforcement and new commitment. These principles are: accessible, universally available, publicly administered, portable, comprehensive. We further ask that Canadians be provided with a properly

funded and sustainable not-for-profit health system. We ask that Canada take back its role as a leader in national health care, insured by a public health system fully supported by the federal and provincial governments.”

I’m presenting this on behalf of a constituent, Bridget Atkins from Blackstock, Ontario, who has supported this along with thousands of other constituents in the riding of Durham.

HYDRO ONE

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I have hundreds of names on these petitions. I will read this in part.

“To the Ontario Legislature:

“Whereas the Conservative government plans to sell off Hydro One and Ontario’s electricity transmission grid—the central nervous system of Ontario’s economy;

“Whereas the government never campaigned on selling off this vital \$5-billion public asset and never consulted the people of Ontario on this plan;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

“To demand the Conservative government halt the sale of Hydro One until the government has a clear mandate from the owners of Hydro One—the people of Ontario.”

It’s signed by a number of residents from Ridgeway, Thamesville, Morpeth and Duart. I too have signed this petition.

LONDON HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the London Health Sciences Centre is a world-class academic health sciences centre serving people throughout southwestern Ontario; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Health has forced the London Health Sciences Centre to find \$17 million in annual savings by 2005; and....

“Whereas the London Health Sciences Centre has been forced to cut 18 programs,” including pediatric cardiac care, “in order to satisfy directions from the provincial Ministry of Health; and

“Whereas these cuts will put the health of the people,” families and patients, “of southwestern Ontario, and particularly children, at risk; and

“Whereas these cuts will diminish the London Health Sciences Centre’s standing as a regional health care resource,” and will cut into the much-needed program at the University of Western Ontario medical school; and

“Whereas these cuts will worsen the continuing physician shortages in the region;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand the” Eves “government take immediate action to ensure these important health services are maintained so that the health and safety of people throughout southwestern Ontario,” and particularly young children, “are not put at risk”

through the cutting of such programs as the pediatric cardiac heart surgery program.

This petition is signed by thousands of residents of southwestern Ontario who are extremely concerned, and I'm pleased to add my name in support.

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

KEEPING THE PROMISE FOR GROWTH AND PROSPERITY ACT (2002 BUDGET), 2002

LOI DE 2002 SUR LE RESPECT DE L'ENGAGEMENT D'ASSURER LA CROISSANCE ET LA PROSPÉRITÉ (BUDGET DE 2002)

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 24, 2002, on the motion for second reading of Bill 109, An Act to implement the measures contained in the 2002 Ontario Budget and to implement other initiatives of the Government of Ontario / Projet de loi 109, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le budget de l'Ontario de 2002 ainsi que d'autres initiatives du gouvernement de l'Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Just to remind members, Mr Bradley and Mr McMeekin have spoken. We are now at questions and comments.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I find it a privilege to be able to comment on the comments of the members just listed, particularly the member for St Catharines—and for Kingston, who is here—and anybody else who has spoken on this budget. Basically, everybody is saying the same thing, except that the member from St Catharines, I know, always finds a way to tie it to his own community because ultimately, at the end of the day, how this budget affects the people that we represent is what's most important.

I know that he spoke about the lack of money for cities. I know that he spoke about the lack of money in this budget, although there was a paltry amount for education, and I know that he has some real concerns about health care in his community. As a matter of fact, did you get your CAT scan yet, or your MRI? I'm not sure. That's always an issue, and I'm not sure whether that's in this budget or not, or whether it's going to be available or not.

I know that there are a lot of communities across this province, including my own, that find themselves in dire straits at the moment where health care is concerned, and the budget did nothing to relieve that concern. Education is another. We've heard over the last few days here the questions raised by many of the members of our caucus around the question of funding for education, and in particular funding for special ed. We know that at the end of the day, if there isn't money for the basic classroom

support, the money that was put in for special education is the first to be sacrificed. In sacrificing that money, you are sacrificing those children who need those services so desperately.

Even though there was a kinder, gentler face put on this budget by some of the language that was used, when you get into it in any detail and you begin to assess the impact that it will have on communities and on people living in communities and the systems that support those people, I think most people will be disappointed. We'll see that this government really hasn't changed its tack at all, it's just doing it in a different way.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): I'm pleased to offer a few thoughts. We were just handed out earlier this afternoon a copy of all of the spending by the various members of the Legislature and I want to compliment that one of the two members to whom we were responding, Mr Bradley, did a very good job of staying well under the budget, the \$236,000 that was allowed.

It's a concern to me, though, because we get many lectures from the members opposite about our profligacy, about how there might be waste or inefficiencies. Yet when I look at this chart, it is indeed sobering. When the media gives so little attention—I know outside they were trying to focus on one line out of this report. But it is sobering to note that in every case the opposition members were the highest spenders. Those would be the people who would have the fewest responsibilities, who don't have the requirement to be down here. What troubles me more on the travel side is that every year, traditionally, we've heard from Mr Phillips and Mr Curling, who have always criticized the Conservative members for their spending.

Interjection.

Mr Gilchrist: Yes, you're right. What goes around comes around—

The Acting Speaker: Order. There is a requirement that we comment or ask questions about the particular speeches that were given by the member from St Catharines and the member for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot.

Mr Gilchrist: Mr Speaker, the clock was not stopped. Allow me to say that considering that this budget includes the allocation for the Legislative Assembly, I suggest that this is quite appropriate. What struck me this year is that every year in the past, Mr Phillips, the member for Scarborough-Agincourt, has gone to great lengths to excoriate members on this side for their spending.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Since the member opposite brought it up, let me just—

Interjections.

Mr Gerretsen: If he wants to get into it, we can, because he is only \$10,000 less than the two members he talked about.

The Acting Speaker: We're not going to discuss comments that were not made by Mr Bradley or Mr McMeekin.

Mr Gerretsen: Exactly, and I appreciate that very much. It should be noted, however, that if the members on the government side are in cabinet or are parliamentary assistant many of the expenses can be placed—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: We're not going there. Comments on Mr Bradley's or Mr McMeekin's speech.

Mr Gerretsen: I thought Mr Bradley's speech last night was absolutely superb, as they always are.

The one thing that has really surprised me about this government is the fact that they now have to change, as a result of this budget, the Taxpayer Protection Act. You may recall that this was their shining piece of legislation. They were going to put in legislation that if there were going to be any tax increases at all, in effect it would have to go to the people. Now, of course, within a year after passing that act, they have to reverse themselves.

Now let me make it absolutely clear that I am not in favour of all these tax cuts they've been implementing over the last five years. I think we as a province, a society and a people would have been a lot better off if we had taken that tax cut money and put it into service programs, whether it's in health care or in education, because that's what the people of Ontario want. They want good public services, whether we're talking about the environment, whether we're talking about educating our young or whether we're talking about the health care services that each and every one of us needs. I'm all in favour of that, but they in effect have had to go against their own promise by now having to change the Taxpayer Protection Act.

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): I'd like to pass comment on the member for St Catharines's speech last night. I know he spent a great deal of time talking about media moguls. He talked about Izzy Asper last night and his seemingly questionable behaviour with the Prime Minister and his discussions about how the media affects how people view us all in the province, and across the country as a matter of fact.

I was somewhat amused, I have to say, because he tried to draw an analogy last night which I thought was a little far-reaching when he suggested somewhere along the line that the Conservatives, and especially Mike Harris, had had an easy ride with the media and that maybe there had been those kinds of relationships, like Izzy obviously has with Jean Chrétien, with Mike Harris. I just wanted to remind the member opposite that we obviously don't see that on this side of the House. We think the papers are usually fairly—

Mr Gilchrist: Not the Toronto Star.

Hon Mrs Johns: The Toronto Star especially is fairly critical of anything we do.

But obviously it comes down to us all thinking about media and the roles and responsibilities of media.

Interjection.

Hon Mrs Johns: I can always yell louder than somebody else across the room.

But let me say that it's difficult to have media where they are intruding or talking about government relation-

ships and trying to influence people. I often read these papers and think, "I wonder if this is an op-ed piece, if this is an editorial or if this is a strict portrayal of the facts." I think, like my colleague across the way, that they need to say that more clearly so people understand what they're reading when they go through the papers. It's easy for us to be not identified well, and I suggest to the Aspers that—

The Acting Speaker: Now we'll have a response from the member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Thank you to all my colleagues who responded.

The Minister of Agriculture is right in saying that what we're looking for is defining what is opinion and what is supposed to be direct reporting, and that's important. She knew last night the point I was making was that I didn't hear a whisper of concern from the right wing when all of these newspapers were seized by Conrad Black, through his millions upon millions of dollars, and converted from what he said were left-wing rags to in effect right-wing newspapers.

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Now a new owner takes over, Mr Asper, and he reads all these papers that constantly are vitriolically anti-Liberal, anti-NDP, pro-Alliance and pro-Mike Harris government. I look at some of the columnists in the Ottawa Citizen. You've got a couple of them who worked in Premier Harris's office. You've got some who work for the Fraser Institute. I simply say what I look for, and I think what the Minister of Agriculture looks for, is some balance out there, not rants against one political party or another, day after day.

As for the member for Scarborough East chastising the Toronto Star, I think you should be happy with some of the columns you've seen lately. It fits into your pattern, where you want to boost the NDP up so you can say, "Well, the NDP is the real opposition"—and the NDP is happy to get that; I don't blame them—"and Ernie Eves has really changed and this is a new government." You can't complain about that when you see those things happening and some of the headlines you get. But of course, as things unfold, the real truth will be known. Unfortunately, you will be trying to counter the real truth with millions upon millions of dollars of government advertising and partisan advertising, which you can afford.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): It's my pleasure to participate. I want to begin my remarks on the budget that was just tabled by commenting on the much-touted fact that it's a balanced budget. Of course, the government wanted and needed that ability to say it's their third or fourth—I forget what number they're bragging about, but whatever it is. The fact is that they're going to achieve it by virtue of deferring primarily their corporate tax cuts and by selling assets that belong to the public. Let's deal with those two things.

First of all, it's fascinating—there are other words but I'll use "fascinating"—that this government has spent

seven years saying that tax cuts increase revenue. Most people know that an expenditure in a budget also covers off tax cuts. So whether you're spending money in health care, spending money in education, spending money in environmental protection, none of which is a priority for this government, if that's where you were spending money, that would be a tax expenditure. When you have a tax cut in a budget, the money you don't receive, the lost revenue to the province of Ontario, to the people's government, is also an expenditure. I had a phone call the last time I talked about that from somebody trying to argue the fact that it wasn't. It is; it's a tax expenditure. During the course of the economic boom that of course was caused by the US economy—and I'll come back to that in just a moment—it's easy to make the argument, when you show the previous budget documents, to say, "We did our tax cuts and, look, personal income tax revenue is up, corporate income tax is up, sales tax is up, ergo tax cuts create revenue." As we said at the time and continue to say, it's easy to make that argument when the economy is booming.

The government likes to take credit for that. They keep saying, and have said all along, that their tax cuts created the boom. We have yet to understand how somebody who lives in Wisconsin and makes a decision to buy a new car somehow makes that decision based on the corporate tax rate or the personal income tax rate in Ontario, Canada. Yet the reality is that we benefited from the economic boom because of the demand coming from the US. We can't sustain alone the number of jobs and the amount of investment we have going into the auto sector, assuming that by the end of the term of this government we still have an auto sector in this province.

One would think that if they're making those arguments during the good times—and our response to that was, "No, this is all just smoke and mirrors. You've got increased numbers in those lines because the whole economy is lifting right now." They denied it; fair enough. Where are we now? At least at the time immediately prior to the tabling of this budget we were into an economic slump. One would think that if they believed so much that tax cuts cover off the tax expenditure, in other words, that you get back the money you lost from cutting the revenue, at a time when revenue is your problem, you'd have the biggest massive tax cut in this year. It just makes common sense that if tax cuts create more money than they cost, at a time when you're short of money, you would have even greater tax cuts. What's the reality? The reality is that they took all the much-touted tax cuts they announced in the last budget and deferred them for a year. Why? Because they can't afford them.

I would argue that anyone looking at this situation would realize their own budget documents put the lie to their argument that sustaining all of these tax cuts has actually increased revenue into the province. It obviously can't be true, or those tax cuts would have been done this year. In fact, they would have done even more. It was interesting last year, after September 11, that the big

response from this government, the first response to the crisis of September 11, was that they moved up the tax cuts. Remember, they moved up the implementation of the tax cuts because, they said, "We've got to make sure there's stimulation out there in the economy." Now, when they need the revenue more than ever, they defer. Why? The real reason is that they do not offset the way you have said they do. They can be strategic. They can have a stimulative effect. I'm going to talk about one tax in particular that actually is an issue of fairness. But to make the argument, as they have, that we benefited from an economic boom because of their cuts is simply not true; it's not the case. If it were, we not only would not have seen a deferral but, to repeat myself, we would have seen even greater tax cuts in this budget. They aren't there because they don't do that. They had to defer those tax cuts because we can't afford them.

What's the other component of balancing the budget? The Premier says they're going to sell off only 49% of Hydro One. We don't know for sure that that's the only sale. All we know is that when we look at the revenue, "other revenue" in 1998-99 was \$640 million. Then it went up to \$2.1 billion—I'm going to come back to that in a moment—then back down again to \$637 million. In the 2002-03 fiscal year, which this budget covers, it goes back up to \$2.4 billion. Why did it go up to \$2.1 billion in 1999-2000? Let's see, what was going on around then? Oh, yes, there was an election. As one recalls, thinking back, you sold Highway 407. You took all that revenue from selling the 407 and you showed it as one year of revenue, the election year, and that's how you paid for a lot of the goodies you promised in the 1999 election. What did we as the people of Ontario get for that investment? We got you again. That's what we got. We don't own the highway any more, but the people who own the 407—boy, they're making a killing. I get a lot of calls in my office about the 407 and the costs: the administrative costs and the per-kilometre costs. We used to own that. That profit would have been ours. It would appear in this budget line, "Profit, 407, property of the people of Ontario, X hundreds of millions of dollars." Instead it goes off to the corporate entities that own the 407. You used that money to pay for election goodies, primarily tax cuts. Now here we are in 2002 and we don't own the highway, private people are getting all the benefits of that public investment and all we got was your government again.

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Here we are, this year, back up to \$2.4 billion. It's interesting, it comes under sales and rentals. I could think of a number of things I could say about rentals, but I'm not going to go there. We're going to go from \$637 million to \$2.4 billion, and we're not even going to get the benefit of the money from the sale of our own asset, because once again you're using all that money for one year of revenue. In the 2003-04 budget, the money will be long gone. Hydro One—49%—or other assets will be long sold and once again all we end up with is you. What a raw deal for us.

Mr Martin: No, we won't get them again. Don't say that. Tell me it ain't true.

Mr Christopherson: I don't mean another election. I'm just talking about where we are next year. That's it. I'm just saying next year we don't have the asset, the money is gone and we're still stuck with them. My goodness, I'd be the last one to stand here and talk about the possibility of three times with these people.

Let me move on to a couple of other things.

Mr Martin: We feel better now.

Mr Christopherson: OK, I've calmed down my colleagues around me.

The one tax cut that was an issue of fairness for large urban centres—by the way, one of the glaring omissions in your budget is any kind of vision for urban centres like my hometown of Hamilton, like Toronto, Ottawa, Windsor, Sudbury, Sault Ste Marie. Pick your city. You've got no strategy. There is nothing to help out.

The closest we came—I was at the FCM conference when Paul Martin spoke. It takes an awful lot for me to get too enthused about a federal Liberal minister's speech. I've heard an awful lot of speeches by ministers.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): Former minister.

Mr Christopherson: Former minister, right. At that time he was the minister. But do you know why it was good? Because he actually talked about a new day for municipalities, that the federal government, recognizing this provincial government isn't doing anything, was prepared at least to start talking about a new era of new revenue streams for municipalities, and that just makes so much sense. Anyway, that spark of hope went away. It got extinguished about 48 hours later with the firing of Paul Martin. Now we're left again with municipalities having no support, no vision, from either of the two senior levels of government, which quite frankly are the only ones that can do anything about this, given the fact that municipalities do not have any kind of constitutional status.

There is nothing in here for municipalities, and yet you've taken great delight over the last seven years in downloading huge amounts of social and infrastructure responsibility to the municipalities, but you didn't give them the money. You kept that money. You got rid of the responsibility, kept the difference in money between what it cost to actually provide those services and what you were spending, and you used that to pay for your tax cuts.

In Hamilton, it's about \$42 million a year. Every year we fall behind. In fact it was one of your own backbenchers, Toni Skarica, to his credit, who voted against your bill because he said it wasn't revenue-neutral and it hurt his hometown, at that time the regional municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth.

There is nothing in here for municipalities, and yet everywhere you look people are talking about the fact that municipalities are the new focus of economic activity. They're not just there to collect the garbage and plow the snow and take care of parking bylaws; they're

responsible for huge amounts of public health, transportation, policing services. And you put on to them affordable housing, a whole host of things that shouldn't be at the lower level, but if you're going to put them there, at least give them the money. There's no change here in this budget, no urban vision. As long as you've got a balanced budget, that's the only thing that matters.

You're now making some noises about doing something for the disabled, but you haven't done it. You didn't do it in the budget. There's nothing in here for the disabled.

There's nothing in here for affordable housing. I hear some of the ministers stand up and talk about how they care about poverty: "We've all got to do something about poverty. We've all got to be a part of the solution to poverty." You've done nothing in this budget. Anybody who is unfortunate enough to be at a job that pays minimum wage—there were all those billions of dollars that went to corporate tax cuts and benefited the very wealthy. What about those who are earning minimum wage or close to minimum wage, that it's pegged to minimum wage? Not a penny in this budget, the same as the previous six. You haven't increased the minimum wage one cent. Not one.

Nothing for the disabled.

You've done nothing about all those families and those children who are on social assistance. When you cut their income by 22%, I didn't hear any one of the government MPPs stand up and say they should take a 22% decrease. No, only go after the poor. And don't talk to me about how much other provinces are giving. The fact of the matter is that you didn't say, "You've got to live with 22% less," to your corporate friends either. No, you said to all those kids in poverty, most of them in families headed by women, "You have to pay the price for our tax cuts," the magic tax cuts that do everything except what they say they do, because if they did, they would have put it in this budget.

The federal government is providing this province with \$844 million over five years for child care. Last year you received \$114 million; this year, \$152 million. Do you know what? Not a penny on providing new spaces, not a penny on making it more affordable, and not a penny to help those early childhood educators who are taking care of our children. Apparently, people in the child care environment call it ABC: anything but child care.

What else have you been touting? You've been bragging about the environmental inspectors; you're going to double the number of environmental inspectors. I see the previous Minister of the Environment here. I'm sure he's had lots to say about that, bragging about that figure. Again, like everything else they say, at first blush, on the surface, it seems to make sense: you double the number of inspectors. But what they haven't told us is that they are all going to be temps; they are all temporary positions. Sometime down the road, maybe after the next election, these jobs could all disappear.

What about all that information these inspectors are going to find out in the field when they go out and start really testing the water—start doing the job that the Ministry of the Environment was supposed to be doing, by the way, before you slashed and burned that over the last few years? What's going to happen with all that mass of information? I'm not really sure, because all the analysts who used to be in the ministry who would take all that information and decide whether or not there's a problem with our public water system, you fired. You've got one microbiologist left who is considered to be an expert in E coli. It's all smoke and mirrors so it looks good, so you can say you've got a balanced budget and, "We've done something about the environment." But once again, when we scratch underneath, it's not what they say it is. It's sure not what the titles of their bills say things are.

In the last couple of minutes, I want to talk about education. Again, along with the member's statement I made earlier, I want to say how proud I am of the Hamilton school board trustees who once again have stood up to this government and supported the kids of Hamilton. That takes a lot of courage. There's usually not a lot of spotlight and focus on those positions, and they're not the kind of folks who normally go out and rock the boat. But I can tell you, they said at the end of the day—and I agree with others who have referred to Wes Hicks's remarks; he's the trustee for ward 8, which is part of my riding. Wes said, "It's time to stand up for the kids. Over 20 years, I have seen the deterioration of our schools, staffing reductions, cuts everywhere. This system has taken enough. A balanced budget will hurt our system."

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So our school board trustees said at minimum \$16 million more than you decreed Hamilton should get is necessary to give our kids a fighting chance for the decent education they're entitled to and they were not about to take the steps and make the decisions necessary to cut that \$16 million. They are the second board to do it. I only hope that by the end of the next week or two we've got five and then 10 and 15 and 20 and ultimately I'd like to see all the school boards say, "No, we're not going to do your dirty work. We're not going to cut any more kids. We're not going to leave any more children who need English-as-a-second-language classes, kids who need decent textbooks and kids who need special education assistants out in the cold just so you can say you've got a balanced budget."

I say bravo to the Hamilton board school trustees, and I hope that they set the model for every other school board across the province in terms of taking you on.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): It always amazes me, the smoke and mirrors that are being used by the members of the opposition. The member for Hamilton West says that the US economy was so strong and that was the reason for the growth in Ontario from 1995 until the present. How is it that this province had

growth in GDP that was higher than any jurisdiction in any of the countries in the G8? The US? They didn't even register on the radar screen, for crying out loud. You're out to lunch.

We had growth here because of the policies that we implemented here. We had net new jobs created up to this point in time; since 1995, 893,000 net new jobs. You have trouble with that. How many jobs did your government create in the five years that you were in power? Minus 10,000.

Mrs Bountrogianni: It was a recession.

Mr Wettlaufer: Yes, a recession. There was supposedly a recession—yeah, yeah. There was a recession. There was all kinds of growth in the American economy between 1991 and 1995. Why didn't Ontario benefit from that growth? Do you know why we didn't benefit from that growth? Because of the policies the NDP government implemented.

I'll tell you something else. You talk about a municipal vision. In the riding I come from, Kitchener Centre, my municipality has its own vision, and that's why our municipality grows at a rate far greater than any other municipality in Ontario. That's why our economy is so strong in Kitchener, because our municipal politicians have the foresight that your other municipalities don't. So don't try to level the blame for that on the provincial or even the federal government. I'm not a fan of the federal government, but don't level the blame at them either.

As far as a balanced budget is concerned, of course it's important. It's important because we don't want to leave a debt to our kids.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I could not begin in the two minutes that I have to do justice to the comments of the member from Hamilton West, any more than I think he would feel he was able to do full justice to what he believes is missing from Ernie Eves's last budget in the 20 minutes that he had to address it.

I noted that the member started by talking about the habit of this government, under Ernie Eves's previous budgets, as well as Mr Flaherty's single budget, of trying to pay for its tax cuts by having fire sales of assets that could indeed be profitable for governments in the future. I think it's important to add to the comments the member from Hamilton West made that there's no exception to that tendency in this budget, because of the sale of a good chunk of Hydro One, fully \$1.9 billion that this government is looking for to pay for its programs in order to afford its future tax cuts, which it is obviously absolutely committed to carrying out.

Hydro One is understandably confusing for people, because the day before a by-election, Mr Eves seemed to make it clear that the sale of Hydro was off the table. Three weeks later it was back on the table. Then just before the budget—I think it was before the budget; I must admit I lose track of the time frame here—it was somehow that Hydro was not going to be sold, and then, lo and behold, in the budget there's \$1.9 billion to be realized from the sale of Hydro One—again, a fire sale of one of our most important assets in order to pay for the

short-term agenda of this government wanting to deliver tax cuts in time for the next provincial election.

The member for Hamilton West talked about the downloading burden on municipalities, the fact that there's nothing here for cities. He probably also wished he had time to mention the fact that there's nothing here for the homeless, another of the areas that has been downloaded by this government on to the backs of municipalities, with no support either in Mr Eves's previous budgets or in Mr Eves's current budget.

I wish the member had had time to deal with the issue of the promise of privatization—private partnerships—to deliver health care so that he could have made it absolutely clear that the reason for this government doing that—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Questions or comments?

Mr Martin: It's my great pleasure to speak in support of the comments by the member from Hamilton West, who gave his usual very thoughtful, intelligent and on-the-spot commentary or critique of this government's financial intentions, particularly as it applies to the budget that was delivered here last week.

He initially talked about the flip-flopping by this government on the issue of tax breaks. First they say, "We're going to give tax breaks because we need the stimulation in the economy after September 11." Then they say, "We can't give them now because we can't afford it." Then, if I heard correctly on the radio today, we hear the Premier musing, "Maybe we should give the tax breaks. Maybe we shouldn't put them off as far as we suggested." I'd suggest that what we have is a government here acting very much like a duck in a thunderstorm. They don't know where they're going. They're confused, because what they thought was going to work for them is turning out to be not so sure any more.

The member from Hamilton West talked about the issue of the disabled in the province and the government's approach. Well, the government will say, "We took the disabled out of the welfare envelope," but they don't say that in doing that they made the qualifications to actually qualify for a disability pension in this province so difficult that most of them don't qualify any more. Then I came in and said, "Well, the very least you can do after seven years of no increases to their income is to give them a little increase based on the cost of living." They said no. Thirty-eight of them voted against that here in this House a week ago. Then the minister muses that maybe she might. Then I asked her a question yesterday whether in fact she would, and she said, again, "No. We can't afford to do that. We can afford corporate tax breaks, but we can't afford an increase in income for the disabled in this province." A duck in a thunderstorm—that's what this government is.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): It's my pleasure to rise to comment on the speech given by the member from Hamilton West. He certainly has an interesting interpretation of the budget, certainly not one which I agree with much, that's for sure.

He was talking about tax cuts. Well, in this budget there was a big tax cut for 50,000 modest-income earners in this province who will no longer pay provincial income tax. That brings the total to 745,000 Ontarians who don't pay any provincial income tax. Mind you, they're still paying federal income tax; I'd like to point out.

I am very pleased to see that a tax reduction is going ahead, and that's one for small business in this province. I can tell you that in my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka, over 80% of the business is small business, and it creates over half of the new jobs in this province. The corporate tax rate for small business is down to 5.5%—the provincial part of it is down to 5.5%. That's very important for my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka and I'm very happy to see that's going ahead. I can tell you that small businesses will be investing that money that's in their hands back into their businesses, creating jobs in this province.

Some other great things that are going on in this budget: the province is investing in the priorities that Ontario residents want to see us investing in, like health care: \$1.7 billion extra money going to health care, \$120 million being spent on cancer research and cancer care, in addition to \$500 million on education, including \$20 million for school buses; taking up on the select committee on alternative fuels and implementing the alternative fuels' recommendation to tax-exempt biodiesel fuels could have a huge effect on the pollution from diesel trucks on our highways.

The fourth balanced budget, and yes, balancing the budget is important because it's our kids who will pay for it if we don't balance the budget. I think this is a great budget.

1620

The Acting Speaker: Response, the member for Hamilton West.

Mr Christopherson: I thank my colleagues from Kitchener Centre, Thunder Bay-Atikokan, Sault Ste Marie and Parry Sound-Muskoka for caring enough to listen and stand up and respond.

In responding to their comments, let me say to the member for Sault Ste Marie that it's acknowledged in this province that nobody single-handedly has done more than you have in fighting for those who don't have a voice. I can tell you, that work goes very much appreciated by those of us who know how much you care about this issue.

To the member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, there are a number of things in health care they didn't do, because in addition to setting things up for more privatization, they haven't done anything about primary health care reform—nothing in the budget to support that.

What about doctor shortages? Nothing being done about that. There was an interesting show last night on the CBC talking about how many foreign-trained doctors there are and how we're not putting systems in place enough to let these foreign-trained doctors provide some of the doctor care that we need, that we're so short of.

There's no patients' bill of rights, no announcement of one. You kept talking about it but you haven't done anything about that.

And what about the nurse shortage, which you created, by the way, because you fired all the nurses a number of years ago? You've done nothing about that in this budget either.

I also want to tell you that when you brag about the \$1.7 billion you're spending on health care, how about acknowledging that about \$600 million of that is coming from the feds? It's not even coming out of your revenue stream. So give me a break when you talk about health care in terms of what you've done or haven't done.

Lastly, let me deal with small business, which the members for Parry Sound-Muskoka and Kitchener Centre talked about. I only had a brief reference to it, but you control the business education tax and you're killing downtown Hamilton and Westdale in my riding because you're not fixing that fast enough, and now you're delaying it another year. You call that fair? You call that competition? You don't really care about small business; you care about yourself.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): It is indeed an honour and a privilege to rise in the House today to speak about Bill 109. It gives me an opportunity to speak about my responsibilities as the parliamentary assistant to the Honourable Dianne Cunningham. I want specifically to talk about post-secondary education and what the act to implement measures contained in the 2002 Ontario budget means to opportunities for post-secondary education.

There is no question that Ontario's students are a very diverse and a very complex group of all ages who come from all backgrounds. They study full-time; they study part-time. I know when I went through post-secondary education here in Canada I went part-time and graduated in 1980 as a mature student. I know in today's reality there are a lot of students who study at a distance. They have a wide range of goals. Elements of this bill I believe cover many different aspects of post-secondary education, and I'd like to speak about a few of them today.

Firstly, we have the University of Ontario Institute of Technology Act, 2002, referred to in the budget as schedule O, which would establish the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, known as UOIT for short, on the campus of Durham College. It's actually 40 years now since we created a new university in Ontario. I believe it's fitting that this new institution would take a very innovative approach to meeting market needs by providing students with a wide range of career-oriented programs in high-demand occupations in the eastern GTA, which of course we all know is an area of very rapid growth.

The Eves government investment, \$60 million in start-up funds, will be matched many times over by the private sector partners who recognize the value of employees who have competitive skills for today's marketplace. I

believe that's important. When you consider that this is a new facility, the first one that has been built in Ontario in over 40 years, you can understand why it is that we really do need to address those competitive skills for today's marketplace.

If approved, the UOIT plans to start offering a range of new market-driven university programs, including applied science, advanced manufacturing, policing and community safety, applied health science, business information technology, applied arts and nuclear technology and safety, and scientific and technological teacher education.

I believe that it's what parents and students have been asking for: post-secondary education that prepares students for careers that call for practical training and theoretical grounding. This would be a unique university that gives them both. This kind of innovative approach to meeting market needs would mark UOIT's introduction to the education field. It's simply smart thinking to ensure that your graduates have the knowledge and the skills that they need to find the jobs they want.

This institution, we believe, will be a natural fit with Durham College. If passed by the Legislature, we look forward to UOIT and Durham College finding new ways of working together and new ways of helping each other to move forward. Our government is particularly proud to be a partner in what we believe to be a very exciting undertaking, and it's going to be a new university that meets the demands of a new technology and a new economy.

Next, we have schedule F. This is the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology Act, 2002. It sets up a separate act for the establishment and governance of colleges and removes these powers from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act.

We want colleges to be better able to respond to the different and unique circumstances of their communities, their student bodies and their local economies or the unique areas of specialization. The intent of this legislation is really to help these colleges to do this by giving them more autonomy to make decisions at the local level and to pursue entrepreneurial activities. They would of course still be held accountable for public dollars. We want colleges to improve on the already excellent job that they do to give students and employers programs that will provide the skills needed in today's and tomorrow's economy. Boards of governors would define the unique role that each college plays in its local, regional, national and even its international communities. College boards would also have increased responsibility for managing real estate transactions, approving programs of instruction and establishing some subsidiary corporations.

Colleges need to continue to be responsive and they also need to be market-oriented. The ability to adapt and to evolve and to be flexible, be nimble, will be vital for future success. This bill will remove some of the bureaucratic requirements related to the need for ministerial approval and it will provide for more local decision-making and more determination, something that we believe

colleges have been asking for for a long time. Colleges will continue to have a community focus. I believe that's important. Certainly it is for the community college in my riding of Scarborough Centre, Centennial College. But they also will have more flexibility to determine which communities they will serve, be they local, regional or provincial.

1630

Already the characteristics of the various colleges vary significantly: in size, in the nature of the communities they serve, the role of the college in the community, the range of the programs they offer, and the partnerships they have with local business, industry and other educational institutions. One size, we know, does not necessarily fit all. The new legislation will allow for greater diversity between and among colleges—I think that's important—and even groups of colleges, because colleges need to be able to specialize. Each college will undoubtedly continue to offer a core of programs to address the needs of their communities; however, it is intended that colleges will increasingly build on their strengths and focus on the majority of programming in a few broader areas, eliminating unnecessary overlap and duplication. We have many examples of this already, specialization in colleges such as Sheridan College, which has, I believe, an international reputation and expertise in animation, or Conestoga College, which has an expertise in manufacturing.

As the college system evolves in its growth, Ontarians will be the beneficiaries; no question about that. We will have the skilled workforce we need to be a thriving, vibrant economy, something we promised to commit to in 1995, and we continue to do so.

Schedule E is a very important section. It's a section that will revise the Ontario College of Art Act to give the college the authority to grant bachelor's and master's degrees in fine arts and design. In 2000-01, the Ontario College of Art and Design, or OCAD as it is known, surpassed the standards set by an independent expert review panel for degree-granting authority. This amendment would only serve to reflect the quality of programming that students have been receiving for many years. There have been so many artists who have added so much to the character and beauty of our province and have learned their trade at the Ontario College of Art and Design. They include Ken Danby, Michael Snow and members of the Group of Seven. How ironic that an institution that produces graduates with the skills and talent to have such a huge impact on our province and to earn international recognition has had, until now, no authority to grant degrees.

There are four Canadian art and design colleges: the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, the Alberta College of Art and Design, the Emily Carr Institute and the Ontario College of Art and Design. Among them, only Ontario's college does not offer its own degrees. Students who graduate from OCAD have only been able to aspire to certificates, diplomas and the "associate of the college" award. Students who felt the need to receive

a degree at the end of their hard work have been forced to turn to other institutions that may not have offered the choice of curriculum they wanted.

It is time that OCAD graduates receive credentials that truly indicate the quality of the education they have received. Up to now, students have sometimes found themselves limited in their choice of work after graduation because their credentials didn't appear on par with those of graduates from other institutions. We don't want them to have to choose between a high-quality fine arts education or a degree. We want them to have both right here in Ontario.

The amendments now before the House answer needs that have been expressed clearly and repeatedly by the administrators of OCAD. The most important amendment relates to giving the college the authority to confer bachelor's and master's degrees in fine arts and design. Anyone familiar with the calibre of graduate turned out by OCAD would agree the college provides a top-notch education.

After extensive meetings and interviews, the panel that assessed OCAD's program made a unanimous finding that, yes, ODAD's proposed degree programs are of international academic quality. With the legislation we're discussing today, we are now acting on that recommendation.

Schedule G deals with amendments to the Ontario Educational Communications Authority Act. That's the act that actually governs the operations of TVOntario. One of our government's priorities is to ensure that lifelong learning programs help Ontarians stay competitive in the workforce by providing them with flexible opportunities to learn new skills and keep existing knowledge up-to-date, while balancing the priorities of family and career.

In January 2001, this government announced the creation of the Centre for Excellence in Lifelong Learning at TVOntario. The proposed amendments to the Ontario Educational Communications Authority Act would recognize the new role of the Centre for Excellence in Lifelong Learning by enabling TVOntario to fully operate and recognize distance education programs by correspondence or by other means.

As times change, TVOntario has changed with them and has launched new services that meet the needs of its audiences. The e-learning division grew out of a new strategic direction taken by TVOntario in 2000 to focus on distance learning, skills training and other educational tools. To support the growth of distance education initiatives, the Ontario government announced the \$5-million lifelong learning challenge fund in the 2000 budget. Almost \$10 million has been invested in eight distance education projects to help adults upgrade or expand their professional skills through access to interactive and Internet training programs that will help to increase their success in the workplace.

All of these programs are helping this government to ensure Ontarians have opportunities to access high-

quality, relevant learning programs wherever and whenever they are needed.

The final piece, the transfer of the Independent Learning Centre—ILC—to TVOntario, was announced by our government in January 2001, and it is an important element in the creation of the Centre for Excellence in Lifelong Learning at TVOntario.

The legislation in schedule G proposes to amend the Ontario Educational Communications Authority Act by giving TVOntario the authority to grant credentials and secondary school diplomas. This will allow TVOntario to take on the full responsibility of the services and programs of the Independent Learning Centre. I believe that clearly meets the core business of TVOntario.

In conclusion, our government is committed to providing the finest possible educational opportunities to Ontarians right here in Ontario. The government believes education is the cornerstone of our province's growth. We want our citizens to be equipped to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing global economy. We also want to be sure our institutions have the ability to respond to the changing priorities of students and employers. We cannot ask them to do this without giving them the tools. It's something they have been asking for and something this budget responds to. We here in the Legislature must show them that we too can respond to Ontario's changing educational needs.

1640

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mrs Bountrogianni: Actually, this part of the bill we're debating is the part we really don't disagree very much with the government about; what we disagree with is the process.

This was originally Bill 65, the post-secondary bill. It was already an omnibus bill, and now it has become part of a super omnibus bill in that they attached it to the budget.

We would have liked some hearings on Bill 65, the former post-secondary bill. I think it would have been in the best interests of the institutions that you are reinforcing in this bill, for example, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. There were concerns brought to our attention from various stakeholder groups which, through correspondence with the Durham College board of governors—the college that will change into this university—balanced the arguments. But we would have liked the public to hear both sides of that argument.

For example, one of the concerns was the quality, and I brought this up in the Legislature. Through correspondence with the future University of Ontario Institute of Technology, I learned a couple of things. First of all, one of the criticisms was that the president of this future university did not have a PhD. I've learned in the process that the president is pursuing a PhD. I heard concerns about the quality of the programming. I've since received biographies of the six deans who have been hired by this institute. They are excellent people; in fact, one from McMaster is a leader in her field.

These are the things the public should have heard publicly. It would have been better for the institutes themselves to have these aired publicly, so there wouldn't be these conflicts that occur from time to time between different institutions. The healthy competition would have been healthier had this bill been debated publicly, the way most bills should be debated; unfortunately, with this government, they're not.

Mr Christopherson: I thought it was interesting that the closing comments of the member for Scarborough Centre—and I wrote them down, so I think I've got it accurately. She said that her government was interested in providing "the finest education possible." She went on to talk about how education is the cornerstone of the future for our citizens, and yet I want to keep bringing this government back to what's going on in education in Hamilton. There's nothing at all that reflects the phrase "finest education possible" when you've got the kind of need that exists in Hamilton.

Let's remember, it used to be that boards of education set their own budgets, and they faced their own constituents in elections as to whether or not they did a good job. I remember that when this government first took power they eliminated the mandatory aspect of JK. You wouldn't fund it. Our school board trustees said, "That's not good enough for Hamilton's children." So they provided the funding for JK. What that meant was a modest increase—yes, a modest tax increase. Do you know what happened to those trustees in the following election? Every trustee who voted for that tax increase was re-elected. This government then said, "Well, obviously these trustees aren't about to do our dirty work, so we'll take away their ability to set their own budgets." Now you underfund educational assistants. The need in September 2001 was 800. Do you know how many you provided for in Hamilton in 2001?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of Environment and Energy, Government House Leader): First of all, I compliment the member for Scarborough West for her speech. I think it was articulate, well-researched and a good defence of the budget and the government.

I understand the histrionics on the other side with respect to the education argument. I think what they tend to forget, with respect to the education argument, is the—

Mr Christopherson: Tell that to our kids.

Hon Mr Stockwell: Well, look, I have kids. I understand the heckling from the Deputy Speaker. I have children in the school system as well, and I do have kids in the public school system. We must understand that the thrust of the bill, when it was originally introduced in this House, was to bring balance and fairness for children to be educated across the province of Ontario.

It was a well-known fact that although school funding in Toronto had reached certain levels of spending, there were other parts of the province—like Huron, Bruce, Grey, all kinds of areas—where it was depressingly low. What had happened was that we were getting two tiers of education, depending on where you lived. Now, not anyone in this House would suggest, simply because you

happen to live in a small town without the tax base, that somehow you should accept a lower standard of education for your children. That was the thrust of the bill. It also allowed equitable financing to the separate school board, and the separate school board got a windfall of money under that new program.

I don't deny that some of the issues are contentious to some degree, but what did we talk about? It was that no matter where in this good province of Ontario you grew up, you could expect the same level and standard of education regardless of where you were. I always thought we all believed in that, and I always thought we all believed that whether you sent your kid to a separate school or a public school, you would get the same access to public dollars regardless of what school system you went to. I thought we all believed in that as well. Systematically, year after year, there were school boards that were terribly woefully underfunded, and it put balance back into the system.

I thought we were talking about fairness. I thought we were talking about propriety. I thought we were saying all kids deserve equal levels of education.

Mr Gerretsen: What I have to say to the last speaker is that yes, it's true that now everyone is underfunded. For the life of me I cannot understand. He's been an elected official at both the local level and now at the provincial level, and the same thing applies to the school trustees out there. Is he suggesting that all of these boards that are passing budgets with severe deficits are doing so—why? To get even with the government, or don't they have the interests of the children at heart?

Let's be perfectly honest about this. What the people of Ontario should understand is that all education funding now comes from the province in either one way or another. They decide how much comes from the property tax base and they decide how much they're going to put in annually. The local school boards do not have any taxing power. They have absolutely no control as to where the money comes from. All they try to do is run an efficient, high-quality education system within the areas where the boards operate, and a lot of boards have come to the conclusion that they cannot do it with the amount of money that's being provided by the province. That's the long and the short of it.

I can't for the life of me understand how the government somehow is trying to insinuate that the trustees are doing this because they like passing deficit budgets. Nobody likes to break the law. It's the fact that you're underfunding the entire system that causes the system to be the way it is and that it isn't the high quality all of us in Ontario want.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Scarborough Centre has two minutes to respond.

Ms Mushinski: I'd like to thank the member for Hamilton Mountain, the member for Hamilton West, the Minister of Environment and Energy and the member for Kingston and the Islands for contributing to this discussion.

It was very interesting because the only member I heard speak in terms of responding to my address spoke about his children. It was interesting because I didn't hear anybody else actually refer to children.

I tried to confine my discussion to providing opportunities for our kids. My grandson is going to be six years old on Thursday, and I truly believe that everything in this budget reflects the need for protecting opportunities for the future of our children. It was interesting because in all the interesting discussions in contribution to this debate, it was only the Minister of Environment and Energy who spoke about his kids.

Let's just get back to what I was talking about. It was about investment and what this budget will do if passed. It was about investment in post-secondary education. It talks about a space for every student, it talks about increasing operating grants and it talks about meeting skills shortages; by 2005-06, \$15 million to support collaborative degree programs in nursing education; it talks about \$14 million by 2005-06 for the expansion of undergraduate medical school enrolment. Those are the kinds of things we need for our future.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

1650

Mrs Bountrogianni: I'll be sharing my time with the member for Kingston and the Islands.

I am really happy to speak to this budget bill, Bill 109. I wish we had more time. The member for Scarborough Centre said that no one talked about children. Let me now have the opportunity to talk about children. I also have children in the public system. I have one in the public, and one is in grade 9 in the separate, and I can say they're suffering equally right now under the tax cuts of this government that are causing the hardships in the school boards.

My son in grade 9 shares lockers, shares books; my daughter's class has to bring Kleenex every week—little things like that. There are a lot of user fees that I'm very fortunate I can afford that a lot of parents can't afford. For example, music lessons used to be part of the curriculum. We pay for them now. Again, my children are fortunate; I can afford it. But many children can't afford to be part of the strings orchestra and so forth.

I want to applaud my colleague from Hamilton West, and earlier my colleague from Hamilton East, for supporting the Hamilton public board of education in their stance against the government and the poor budgets. I too applaud the Hamilton board of education. It does take courage to stand up against this government. The hospitals have suffered for it, the universities have suffered for it and certainly, as I will get to in a moment, the colleges continually suffer because of it.

I worked at the Hamilton board for 11 years and I can tell you their commitment to children, and particularly special education children, is second to none. When I was there in the psychology department, children waited approximately three months to be assessed. Again, three months is a long time when you're a parent waiting for your child to be assessed, but it was a reasonable amount

of time. Since 1995, that has crept up to a one-year waiting period.

I understand the Minister of Labour's point about equalizing the money across the province, but basically this has caused hardship to those boards that for various reasons needed the extra money. For example, Hamilton has the second-largest number of immigrants per capita in the province, so of course we're going to have English-as-a-second-language needs. Hamilton does have a world-class centre called Chedoke-McMaster. Families who have special-needs children move to Hamilton because of this place. So of course we have a lot of special-needs children, much more than the rest of the province per capita, and that is proven.

We have other issues too and the member for Hamilton West knows these very well. Some of the people I'll be talking about live in his riding, as well as in my riding, but particularly in downtown Hamilton. The poverty rate is very high in Hamilton and always has been. As well, we have I believe the highest teenage pregnancy rate in the province. So we have a lot of challenges in Hamilton. It's a great city but we have a lot of challenges.

The fact that the Hamilton board of education's budget was lacking is not an accident. We have children with needs, we have families with needs, and the board was a leader in the country. If you said "Hamilton board" out in British Columbia 10 years ago, they knew about our special education department. I don't think they can hold their heads up with the same kind of pride that they could 10 years ago, and it isn't the board's fault.

There; I talked about my children, member for Scarborough Centre. I've talked about a lot of children over the past three years in this place. In fact, by deferring the corporate tax cut rate instead of cancelling it, this government could have put that money into some very important programs.

The member for Nickel Belt yesterday did an excellent job in highlighting the needs of autistic children and the intensive behavioural therapy they require. It is expensive therapy. I used to work with autistic children and I can tell you it's very difficult to help those children. But this therapy, after many years of research, has been shown to be phenomenally effective. Of course, they don't lose their autism, but they can behave normally. They can actually behave normally after years of reinforcement from this therapy. Yes, it's expensive, but in the long run we save money if these kids can become functional adults. So the money could have been put in there.

Earlier today in a member's statement I brought the plight of one of my constituents, Marie Clayton. She had been waiting for two years for a spot in Macassa Lodge, on the Mountain, and finally she got it, but because the physician at Macassa Lodge is not taking any more patients and because she doesn't have a physician herself, she can't go.

Four other constituents have called me in the last three months. We've been calling doctors and calling doctors. We finally have a meeting between one doctor and one of

my constituents next week. There are no guarantees. We don't want to give false hope, but that's the best we could do, and my constituent assistants have been phoning, phoning, phoning.

The reason for this is that a physician attending to a patient in a retirement home receives \$47 per visit whereas a physician attending to a patient in a long-term-care facility receives only \$17. That differential is what makes it very difficult to fund doctors and for patients to find doctors in these long-term-care facilities. As well, even if they do get a spot and even if they're fortunate enough to have a physician, as my leader earlier stated, there isn't adequate funding at these facilities for some very basic needs.

Another crisis that is brewing in our city of Hamilton is home care. I received a call earlier today, and VHA, one of the home care agencies, is struggling right now. They have a four-year contract. There was not one penny in the budget for home care and they are struggling. We will probably have a further crisis in our city in home care very soon because of that.

There was nothing in the budget for shelters. There was nothing in the budget for implementation of the Hadley recommendations. Again, it's not that this terrible problem has disappeared—it hasn't disappeared. Just seven weeks ago in the Premier's own riding a woman was run over by her husband. Three months ago in my riding a 31-year-old woman, the mother of three kids, was bludgeoned to death by her partner-husband. I know we all want to solve this problem but we can't do it without implementing the Hadley recommendations. There was no mention of that in this budget.

As well, a father from Burlington wrote all of us, I believe, seeking assistance for his son, Kevin. There wasn't any money, for example, in the Ministry of Health for the assistive devices program. Kevin Stone has moderately severe cerebral palsy and requires a walker to move about. His father has applied to the assistive devices program for two walkers—an indoor walker and an outdoor walker. I just want to point out that this father has done everything he can for his son. He drives his son back and forth to school, so the family is not dependent on the school board for driving back and forth. The son has to come home for lunch, for various medical reasons, and the father has taken care of that aspect. He has taken responsibility. This particular solution wouldn't even cost any money. Two different ambulation aids are allowed, but they consider the indoor and the outdoor walkers as the same type, so they don't give the man two for his son. A simple change in regulation would actually solve Mr Stone's problem, but here's another example of this government's priorities.

The other aspect the member from Scarborough Centre talked about that was sorely lacking in this budget was funding for colleges. Yes, the universities were funded, after a lot of lobbying from the universities themselves, but the colleges don't have the sophisticated lobbying that the universities do. They don't have the history and they don't have the resources to lobby

government, and they receive less than 7% of the double cohort money. This is at a time of a skilled worker shortage. There has been a lot in the media about this gap in the last few days and I sincerely hope the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities addresses this with the Premier and puts more money for colleges into the budget. It's not too late. It's getting there, because the double cohort is coming very quickly, but it's not too late.

In fact, yesterday the minister had a press conference saying that all of the students who applied to universities had gotten in and therefore they had solved the double cohort problem. Well, in fact, they haven't. Number one, the double cohort is in another year—we're talking about September 2002—and second, we don't know how many of the students received their first choice. When you look at Western, for example, their applications were up 20% but they will only increase their acceptances by 6%. For them it's a quality issue. They don't want to have overcrowded classrooms. Unfortunately, 14% of the students who applied to Western will be very disappointed.

The largest double cohort in the country is in the 905 area, and many of those students apply not only to the universities here, close to home, but also to the other universities. I would like to know the statistics of where they got in. Traditionally, the 905 students do not go away from home. The majority of them actually commute back and forth to university. I think they will be in for a rude awakening in 2003.

To summarize, by delaying the corporate tax cut and not cancelling it, by delaying the private school tax credit and not cancelling it, monies that should have gone into health care, education, the environment and many other areas did not go there. I think there will be dire consequences as a result.

1700

Mr Gerretsen: This place never ceases to amaze me. We can be talking sometimes on a one-page bill for three or four days, and yet here we have a bill that contains about 20 different sections dealing with anything from secondary education to primary education to fuel tax to tobacco tax to changes to the Taxpayer Protection Act. You can go on and on. It's like an omnibus bill, and yet we're expected to debate it in the same length of time and do it any justice at all, a bill that's almost 70 pages long.

There are many different aspects one could talk about. The one I would like to address today is the question of community care access centres and long-term funding. I don't think the people of Ontario should be under any misunderstanding. In this current budget there is absolutely no increased funding for community care access centres. These are the centres that provide our home care services, our nursing services for people who are able to stay at home rather than in long-term-care facilities or in hospitals. There's absolutely no increased funding in this budget.

What really surprises me about this is that I know the government has heard all the complaints we hear on this side of the House, where people used to get six hours or

eight hours a week of nursing and home care services so they could live in their own environment and not have to go to a long-term-care facility, or could recuperate from a hospital visit at home, rather than in hospital, in a much less costly and more effective way as far as the individuals are concerned, and where people have been cut off, where home care services have been totally terminated for a lot of seniors. Yet there has been absolutely no increased funding.

You may recall that the government sort of tried to do a finesse on this issue just before last Christmas when they got rid of all the existing boards, boards of well-meaning individuals in our communities, and replaced them with other boards. They somehow were trying to get the people of Ontario to buy into the notion that if we just changed the boards, somehow that would give greater service to the seniors who actually need them at home. I would dare say that the boards that have been appointed are of good quality individuals as well. The government has much tighter control over them. The point I'm trying to make is that by changing the boards without increasing funding for community care access centres, the lack of services that were there before for our seniors is still going to be there.

I ask the government, why didn't you increase the funding for community care access centres? We all agree with the idea that if people can stay in their own homes longer, and if we have to provide them with a little bit of nursing help and care, that's preferable to having them go into an institution.

The second area I want to talk about is long-term-care facilities. I know the government loves to talk about the fact that they're going to add, over the next 10 years, some 20,000 new beds. Laudable as it is, we shouldn't lose sight of two important features. The first feature is that this government, through hospital restructuring, closed a lot of hospitals and a lot of hospital beds in this province. Basically, 5,000 chronic care beds that used to be part of the hospital system have in effect been removed from the hospital system. So it is only logical that those individuals who are in those chronic care beds have to go somewhere, and obviously the place for them to go in most cases is long-term-care facilities. So although it is laudable to build new beds, one of the reasons why these beds were announced and are actually being built currently is that they are needed because they were closed in the hospital sector. It's as simple as that.

The other issue that I want to bring up in that regard is that the government loves to talk about these new beds. What we've been talking about on this side of the House is that the operational funding that is required by the long-term-care facilities—by our nursing homes, by our charitable homes, by our municipal homes, by our for-profit homes for the elderly that are out there—has to be increased.

I found it very interesting that in the recent PricewaterhouseCoopers study that was done in which 10 jurisdictions across the western world, both in the United States and in Europe, were studied as to how much

government actually puts into long-term-care facilities on a per bed basis, on a daily basis, a number of things were quite clear. I'll just refer to that. I've done this before in the House but I feel so strongly about it that I think it bears repeating.

The first point is that Ontario ranked dead last in meeting the needs of residents in nursing homes and homes for the aged—last—below Mississippi, below Alabama, below three or four of the jurisdictions in Europe that were compared; and that Ontario long-term-care residents received the least amount of registered nursing care and the least amount of nursing and personal care, on average about two hours per day.

We all know, from having visited nursing homes, from having visited the other long-term-care facilities that are out there, that the people who are there are much older and in a much frailer condition than they were 10 or 20 years ago. People go into these places, into their new homes, much sicker, in a condition where they need a lot more help, and yet we in Ontario spend less on a daily basis for nursing care and for personal care than any other place that was studied in the government's own funded study. I think that is deplorable, particularly when you consider that about two thirds of the people who live in our long-term-care facilities have restricted ranges of motion and simply cannot look after themselves on an ongoing basis. Many of them, over 60%, suffer from some form of dementia.

Yes, new money is required for the beds that are finally coming on stream, for the capital cost that's involved in that, but what we've been talking about is putting some money in to increase the operational support for these beds. Now, the government will say, "Yes, we put \$20 million in," but \$20 million is a drop in the bucket. According to the study that was conducted, the amount that is needed is about an extra \$200 million per year, or \$750 million over the next three years. Is that doable? I suppose it is if we put all our efforts into that.

I'm a realist. I realize full well that there are all sorts of other demands on the taxpayers' dollars as well, but we can at least start to make an attempt to meet those needs so that we can give the elderly in our long-term-care facilities the kind of care they deserve. They have contributed a lot to this province. They have made this province what it is. They have contributed to making Canada one of the best countries in the world to live in, and the least that we owe them, a group of individuals who perhaps don't have the lobbying groups behind them the way so many other people have—many of these people don't speak out on their own behalf—the least we can do for them is provide the best care possible.

We heard today again that the average senior in one of these homes gets one bath a week. We had people here a couple of weeks ago from one of the homes. I believe it was Leisureworld here in Toronto. Out of the 15 or 20 seniors who were here, they all confirmed that they only get one bath per week. I don't think that's good enough for our elderly. The only way we can improve that is by hiring more competent staff for these homes, and the

only way that can be done is by the government increasing the per diem. It's very interesting to note, when you look at what the average senior pays in one of these homes and compare it to other provinces, in Ontario the minimum daily accommodation rate a senior pays is \$44.21. Now, it's interesting. When you compare that to Alberta, it's \$28.22. As a matter of fact, every other province, of the other seven or eight I've got here, is below \$30 per day.

So I say to the government, a society ultimately gets judged on the manner in which it deals with the most vulnerable people in our society. Certainly the 60,000 seniors who live in these facilities and the many other seniors who are on waiting lists trying to get in, some for as long as two to three years, deserve better than what we've been doing. They don't need a tax cut; they need help.

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The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Christopherson: I'm pleased to rise and comment on the remarks of the members for Kingston and the Islands and Hamilton Mountain. Specifically, I want to respond to the comments of the member from Hamilton Mountain because she spent so much time talking about the Hamilton education system. I want to compliment the member for Hamilton Mountain on her tenacity in terms of standing up and fighting for Hamilton issues. We take great pride in Hamilton that, regardless of what party you come from, at the end of the day, when we're under the shadow of Toronto the way we are, the only chance we've got is to stick together on Hamilton issues and not let partisan membership decide whether we're on or off an issue. She certainly has continued and built on that tradition, and I commend her for it.

I would like to add to what the member for Hamilton Mountain said by reading into the record a number of statistics that stem from a news conference that I attended a week ago yesterday with the chair of the Hamilton public school board, Judith Bishop, who also happens to be the school trustee for wards 1 and 2, which are in my riding. These are the number of positions that our board has lost from 1995 to last year. From 1995, when you took power, to last year, here's what we've lost: 140 elementary teachers; 50 secondary teachers; two consultants and resource teachers; 53 secretarial staff; seven principals; three vice-principals; 80 professional support staff, made up of social workers, lunchroom assistants, computer technicians and psychologists; 69, almost 70, board administration staff; and 233 school operations plus a 0.25 for transportation. That is 639 positions lost to our school board because of you.

Mr Gilchrist: I'll see if I have better luck this time.

The member opposite certainly touched on a number of subjects, every one of which is in fact covered by the budget. There's no doubt that the record spending on health care does not seem to be recognized by the member opposite. He also seems to have ignored the lines dealing with increased support in our education system, \$556 million more. He continues to spin the line that

somehow there is nothing but doom and gloom across this province. I know they have a hard time explaining the 1999 election and how, after four years and all of the changes that had been brought in consequence to the dire circumstances we found ourselves in in 1995, they dismissed the 50% of the people in Scarborough East and a similar percentage in all the ridings represented by government members. Somehow all of those voters didn't know what John Gerretsen knows, and they didn't have a connection to the health care system, the education system; only the experts sitting opposite know.

I know that the Oracle of Delphi—sorry, the oracle from Kingston would have us believe that he is the font of all knowledge, but I'm going to tell you, when I look at my hospital, which has seen a 50% increase in its funding, which had two empty floors since 1967 that had never even had drywall in them, where governments of every stripe had let that building sit one-sixth empty, and it's filled today with more doctors, more nurses, more pieces of equipment—a \$5-million MRI, a new breast cancer screening and treatment centre, a new pediatric centre. In fact, \$10 million was just given to them to add an entire new pediatric wing.

That's the reality of health care in Ontario, multiplied in community after community all across this great province: a massive investment, a 50% increase in spending since we were elected in 1995, in stark contrast to the beggaring and the theft by your cousins in Ottawa.

Mr John C. Cleary (Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh): First of all, I'd like to congratulate my colleagues for their well-thought-out speeches. The same things that they talked about apply in my community.

The budget did nothing to increase home care budgets. We've still got people who need the service and there isn't anything there for them. Long-term-care facilities are suffering from chronic underfunding. Not only are there long-term waiting lists to get a spot in the facility, but once you get there you only have 15 minutes of programming per day and one bath a week. Long-term care is a big issue in my community. I guess the new funding amounts to about \$1.65 per day.

The other issue that I would like to talk a little bit about is the health care restructuring that came to our two hospitals. A local committee had made a decision on what they wanted in our community, something that would work. Now they've asked for some extra funding to look at the decision of the health care restructuring commission. Dr Sinclair and his gang came into my town and made a mess of the community. Our community doesn't know how they're going to get out of it. It's my understanding that his restructuring commission cost the taxpayers \$7 billion, and that money could have been better spent in hiring nurses and people to run the facilities.

Anyway, I'm just hoping the minister will come through with some funding to get this mess straightened out once and for all.

Mr Martin: I want to commend the member for Hamilton Mountain and the member for Kingston and the

Islands for speeches this afternoon that were both very well delivered and an excellent critique of the budget. One has only to go back to one's community and talk to the real people out there and look at what's happening to the different systems to understand that what this government is delivering is not in any way hitting the mark.

I used the analogy a short time ago of a duck in a thunderstorm to describe how this government is operating. They want to shift and yet they don't want to shift. They present a different face and yet when you dig deep enough you find that they are really the same. One minute they're going this way; the next minute they're going the other.

All you have to do is look at their track record on Ontario Hydro: one minute they're privatizing because they are hearing from their friends on Bay Street; the next minute they look at the polls and they realize that a whole lot of people don't think it's a good idea, so they're not going to privatize it. Then they are going to privatize half of it, but not till later. Nobody knows where they are going or what they are doing. It's very confusing.

Last year, after September 11, they decided to move up the tax breaks in the budget. Then they decided they want to defer the tax breaks. Now we hear today the Premier musing, "Maybe in the fall we'll do the tax breaks." So you really don't know; you don't know where you're going or what you're doing. There's no anchor here. It's like a duck in a thunderstorm.

With regard to the disabled, I bring forward a bill that says, "Give the disabled in the province a little increase." They say no. Then the minister comes back last week and says she's considering. I get up yesterday in the House and ask a question and she, by not answering, indicates no again, I suppose.

They don't know. They don't know what they want to do; they don't know where they want to go. They know they are in a difficult time. They have Bay Street talking to them. They are looking at the polls. They know they have an election coming up. A duck in a thunderstorm: that's what this government is, and it doesn't serve any of us well.

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The Acting Speaker: In response we have the member for Kingston and the Islands.

Mr Gerretsen: You always know that you've hit a nerve on the other side when some members—not all members—on the other side start using personal attacks. I don't know what the member from Scarborough East was talking about. I didn't even talk about health care. I talked about long-term care and long-term-care facilities.

I'm not sure if he saw the chart that was in the National Post this morning. I found it very interesting. In terms of gross domestic product—and this comes from your own news organ, the National Post—the amount of money that we spent on health care in Canada is exactly the same percentage that we spent in 1995. It's 9%. Check the National Post today.

I was talking about trying to do something for those people, for those individuals who lie in those nursing homes and who are in long-term-care facilities who can't speak for themselves. According to the 50,000 petitions we received, staff look after them for about four minutes a day, to assist them in getting up, getting washed, dressed and to the dining room. They get about 15 minutes of programming per day. They get one bath a week.

What I'm saying to you is that, to my way of thinking, it is more important to see that those people are properly looked after than to provide another tax cut for another group of individuals. That's what government should be all about: it should be helping the most vulnerable in our society the best way it possibly can. Your government is not doing that right now—never did.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): I wish to rise today and discuss the Ontario budget. I want to focus on a couple of issues, but before I do, I want to draw everyone's attention to the fact that this was, once again, the fourth in a row, a balanced budget.

The other most important priority in this budget was the fact that it dealt with the priority programs of health, education and the environment. In health, the spending has increased by 7.3%. This means that since 1995 the health care budget in this province has risen from \$17.6 billion to \$25.5 billion. This demonstrates this government's commitment to health care in this province. As well, in education, we are currently spending \$14.3 billion. That includes a \$400-million increase over 2001-02. Finally, in the other priority program, in the environment, we are spending \$174 million to upgrade municipal water and waste water systems. These are the priority issues that are referenced in the budget.

In today's debate, I would like to spend some time discussing how initiatives in the Ontario budget support municipalities and the quality of life in Ontario. The government understands that strong cities, towns and rural communities are vital to achieving economic prosperity. For this reason, the province has undertaken numerous measures designed to ensure the continued success of our municipalities. We implemented comprehensive and far-reaching reforms to the property tax system to improve fairness and to restore the health of this important revenue source for municipalities.

Prior to doing this in 1998, many municipalities had not updated their property assessments in decades. The result was that in many municipalities assessments were 20 to 50 years out of date. The current value assessment system now in place provides up-to-date assessments that are both fair to taxpayers and provide a more reliable assessment base for municipal and education property taxes.

Ontario is a leader in property tax reform. In undertaking reform, the province committed to providing more than \$1 billion in property tax relief, with \$500 million going to businesses and \$500 million going to residential property owners. In 2002, property taxpayers will save

over \$650 million due to the education tax cuts to date, from 1998 to 2002, with businesses saving over \$400 million and residential property owners saving over \$250 million.

In 1998, the province undertook local services realignment, the first major reform initiative to transform the manner in which the province and Ontario's municipalities manage and fund key services. The local services realignment changed the cost sharing arrangements of 16 programs, resulting in a transfer of approximately \$2.5 billion in net costs to municipalities. In exchange, the province provided \$2.5 billion in residential property tax room to municipalities. To ensure a fair and even exchange of responsibilities took place for every municipality, the province also provided municipalities with funding through the community reinvestment fund. For 2002-03, the province will provide \$582 million in that community reinvestment fund to municipalities.

The introduction of the first new Municipal Act in Ontario in over a century ensured that the legal and financial powers of municipalities were also part of the reform and would support the modern responsibilities of municipalities. This act will promote well-administered, economically healthy communities, will also support municipalities in delivering local services in innovative and efficient ways and, finally, will enable municipalities to charge user fees and operate services on a cost recovery basis where appropriate.

To further improve the state of municipalities, the province also launched Smart Growth to promote and manage growth in ways that sustain a strong economy, build strong communities and promote a clean and healthy environment. Smart Growth initiatives have addressed new transportation corridors essential to meet the province's long-term growth needs, introduced brown-fields legislation to revitalize abandoned urban land and created Smart Growth panels to advise government on issues that cross municipal boundaries. The province will continue to work in partnership with municipalities, guided by Smart Growth principles, to ensure that communities have the infrastructure they need to sustain their contribution to Ontario's economic prosperity.

Through the 2002 Ontario budget, the province is also investing significantly in municipalities through SuperBuild. SuperBuild was created to ensure that Ontario has first-class infrastructure for the 21st century. Of the \$2.7 billion that SuperBuild plans to invest in 2002-03, \$520 million, including federal flow-throughs, will be invested in municipal infrastructure programs, such as helping municipalities make investments to bring them into compliance with the new Ontario drinking water protection regulation and make other improvements to their water and waste water systems; improving and modernizing sports, cultural, recreational and tourism facilities; enhancing and expanding public transit and renewing municipal bus fleets; and investing as a partner in strategic infrastructure projects in major urban areas, including the Toronto waterfront revitalization initiative.

Under SuperBuild Millennium Partnerships for strategic investments in large urban centres outside the GTA, eight urban areas are eligible for \$271 million in millennium partnerships multi-year funding. These areas are London, Hamilton, Niagara region, Ottawa, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Waterloo region and Windsor. These municipalities will be able to use their funds for various projects, including downtown revitalization, water and sewer upgrades, environmental remediation and road improvements.

The Ontario budget announced strategic infrastructure investments in the GTA through SuperBuild to help the area meet its economic and population growth needs. These investments will enable the GTA to remain among the world's first-class urban areas.

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The province has made GTA capital investments in health care, education, transportation, justice and technological innovation. Investments were committed to revitalize the Toronto waterfront, to new hospital and long-term-care facilities construction and renovation in the GTA, to major projects at colleges and universities to address post-secondary growth needs, and to upgrade and expand courthouse facilities.

To improve the quality of life of our communities, the province is investing \$148 million in 2002-03 in the greater Toronto area. To unlock the gridlock challenge in the GTA and the Golden Horseshoe, the province took back responsibility for GO Transit operations and base capital funding.

Where municipalities choose to borrow funds to support their investments in infrastructure, the province wants to ensure that the borrowing costs are as low as possible. The government believes that municipalities must be able to move forward with important infrastructure projects such as new water treatment facilities, sewers and roads. Opportunity bonds would provide them with a low-cost financial tool for infrastructure development and give them more control at the local level.

The government will consult and work in partnership with municipalities, the private sector and other stakeholders to develop the most efficient and beneficial design for tax-free opportunity bonds.

The government is also dedicated to assisting Ontario's smaller and more remote communities.

We are committed to working with municipalities, the federal government, the private sector and others to meet the needs of our urban communities. There are many challenges ahead, but we are certain that our commitment to the health of our communities in this budget and to our quality of life will guide us through.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I don't think it's unrealistic for us to expect that this budget should contain provisions to help out people who are most in need of care. There are many aspects of the budget; I wish I had more time. For example, the fact that there was no additional money for home care is truly

startling. I know what the government members will say. They'll talk about all the money they've put into home care over the years, but what they won't tell you is that this is all because of the whole restructuring of the health care system that they forced on the province.

They were the ones who made the decision that they were going to close hospitals, cut back on the number of beds and have people cared for in their homes. The fact is that we now have a situation where for the last year and a half there's been a freeze on the home care budget. So to not see an increase in the home care budget this time around is truly startling and very upsetting. We all have stories of constituents who are truly in desperate need of more home care and are simply not receiving it. I think it's startling that the government made no reference to that. The fact it's not there is a disgrace.

Earlier today my colleagues from Kingston and the Islands and Hamilton Mountain were talking about long-term care. It is simply a tragedy and a disgrace that we have people who have earned good care by the province, who are living in long-term-care facilities and are getting at best one bath a week. That is also wrong. An increase in the operating funds for our long-term-care facilities should have been there.

My colleague from Hamilton Mountain made reference to children with autism. If they provide intensive behavioural intervention for these young children, they can grow up to be fully functioning young adults. If you don't do it, the consequences are extremely dire. It's awful to think that at the age of six suddenly there's discrimination that comes into place and you can no longer receive the service when you're past the age of six.

There are many other things that should be there, and I certainly would like the member for York North to respond as to why those things are not in the budget.

Mr Christopherson: It was interesting listening to the comments of the member for York North. It really struck me when she talked about the fact that the government took back responsibility for GO Transit. I have yet to hear—maybe that will change in the two-minute response—a member of the government say, "We made a mistake and we shouldn't have downloaded GO Transit to the municipalities in the first place." But they don't do that. If that happens this afternoon, wonderful, I'm pleased I played a role in getting them to admit that they actually see they made a mistake. In every other area, it's never your fault. It's always somebody else's fault.

The reason you took back GO Transit wasn't out of the generosity of your heart; it was because you finally realized what we told you from the moment you announced it: municipalities can't afford to fund the provincial rail system. If you had any kind of real commitment toward the environment, not only would you take back control but you'd be making major announcements of investments in GO; new money, new investment.

What about public transportation? I know in Hamilton the HSR desperately needs funding; there's no commitment there. DARTS, which is our system for the dis-

abled, is getting really sad. I say to the member for North York, I don't know what the situation is in your community, but in my community they don't have the money to provide anywhere near the level of demand on the service. Aren't the disabled first-class citizens like everybody else? Shouldn't they have the same opportunity to travel around their community? Where's your commitment to the disabled, the environment and public transit?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I think the member from North York is far too modest—

Mrs Munro: York North.

Mr O'Toole: York North, not North York; I understand, but you could easily take care of the people in North York as well.

The confidence that's been expressed, even in the budget statement—I think it's important to put on the record that Minister Tsubouchi, who's the Chair of Management Board, has established a parliamentary assistants' committee on program evaluations, chaired by no other than the member for York North. I have to commend her. Also on that committee—I'm surprised I'm not on there—with Julia Munro is Frank Mazzilli, the member for London-Fanshawe; Marilyn Mushinski, the member for Scarborough Centre; Garfield Dunlop, a very hard-working member, from Simcoe North; and Wayne Wettlaufer, the member for Kitchener Centre, an esteemed member with a financial mind like a Swiss banker.

I just say this: I feel very confident about this program review. Together with the principle of zero-based budgeting and the commitments made to health, education and the environment, it's been the right thing to do in making the right choices. The people of Ontario know our Premier, Ernie Eves, listened. Some would say he blinked. I think he listened and acted appropriately.

I would say that Janet Ecker, who I know extremely well as the member from Ajax-Pickering and now the Minister of Finance, was somewhat saddened when she had to roll back the education tax credit and cancel that for a year. I'm confident that going forward she will see the light and re-implement it as soon as possible.

I'm also very happy with the role of Rob Sampson, the member for Mississauga Centre, to work with the Ontario Financial Review Commission to do the right thing in this province. There's such strength on this side. I see Frank Klees, Cam Jackson and Bert Johnson. The strength in this caucus and the utilization by our Premier is well worth taking note of.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I'm pleased to respond to the comments by the member for York North, who is one of the more reasonable voices on that side of the House and usually shares her views in a compassionate, kind manner.

I must say, though, the issue of omission I think is one of the cornerstones of this budget. I would like to just recount one example, because many people have talked in terms of generalities. This afternoon I phoned a constituent of mine—his name is Mr Menard—and spoke to him. I had met him a few times at a seniors' residence.

He's on his own. He's 88 years of age. He has cataracts and he has prostate cancer. He had three hours and 10 minutes of home care that was very valuable for him. It helped in some preparation of food and so he could get his bath. He cannot take a bath on his own. I felt really badly. The reason I felt badly, of course, is that these are our parents and grandparents who have served this country well, and now, in their time of need, we're not there for them.

It also points out a false sense of economy. One of the reasons I believe the government was initially so strongly in favour of home care was to relieve some of the pressure on hospitals and to deal with quality of life at home, which is the best place for a patient to be: closer to relatives, friends or their own particular environment. So I want to point that out. That to me is one of the disappointing aspects of this particular budget, by virtue of its omission.

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The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mrs Munro: Thank you to the members for Thunder Bay-Superior North, Hamilton West, Durham and Ottawa Centre.

In the few moments I have to respond to the comments that have been made, I'd just like to concentrate on two areas. The first one has to do with health care. Today in this province 47 cents of every dollar collected is spent on health care. I think the issue then that needs to be addressed is one shared by the provinces across the country, and that of course is the fact that there are limits on the federal contribution, which simply makes it extremely difficult for all provinces to deal with health care.

The other area raised was the issue of the environment and transportation and transit. I would just draw to everyone's attention the commitment that was made a few months ago with regard to the provincial government's commitment to transit, in the way of a \$9-billion commitment to allow municipalities to invest dollars into their own communities for transit.

I can speak directly to this in relation to the region where I live. It has allowed, through \$10 million being made available in York region, for an extraordinarily ambitious York regional transit network that is being provided to the residents of my riding and the other ridings of York region. So it's very clear to me that it demonstrates this government's commitment to transit and, certainly, the environmental concerns that are raised with regard to decreasing the amount of car travel.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Cleary: I'd like to share my time with the member from Middlesex.

I am pleased today to have a few minutes to comment on the budget that was announced last week. It is hard to believe the government can claim to be good money managers. When the Tories came to power in 1995, they inherited a \$91-billion debt. Now the debt has skyrocketed to \$111 billion or more. That's over \$20 billion in seven years. I don't—

Mr Wettlaufer: That's \$110 billion, John.

Mr Cleary: Mine says \$111 billion. I know you want to claim that you're decreasing the debt and all that.

When the debt is increased, some of our most vulnerable citizens and seniors suffer. The budget did nothing to increase the home care budget. Maybe the Minister of Finance could come up to my riding and hear from the seniors who are trying to stay in their own homes as long as possible and cope with very few hours of home care. But what's the alternative? Long-term-care facilities are suffering from chronic underfunding. Not only are there long waiting lists, but it's hard to get a spot. When you do get a spot, you get 15 minutes of programming per day and one bath per week.

According to a news release from the Ontario Long Term Care Association, less than one quarter of the \$200 million announced in the budget is actually new operating costs. The remaining funds were announced previously, some back as far as 1998.

The new funding provided in the budget works out to be about \$1.65 per day. According to administrators in my community, that does nothing to help with what they're trying to do. The money is a far cry from the \$750 million over three years that the administrators and the Ontario Long Term Care Association asked for.

Unfortunately, long-term care and home care are not the only things that are suffering from government mismanagement. In my riding, the hospital restructuring commission has been talked about since the commission came to town in 1998. That's almost four years ago and nothing has happened since. Our community wants an independent study done to determine what restructuring options are best for our municipalities and the stakeholders. I have written to the Minister of Health asking for a few dollars of funding so they can conduct a study. The local health council had made a decision on what was good for my community, and Duncan Sinclair and his health care restructuring commission came to town and changed everything. My understanding is that his committee, over the period that they worked, cost the taxpayers of this province \$7 billion. Now we have to try to figure out how we're going to get out of that and plan a hospital which will serve the needs of the community for many years. I hope the minister is listening, because I approached him the other day and wanted to know if he was going to help us out so that we could provide the facilities we need.

Local municipalities are struggling to keep up with necessary infrastructure repairs to roads and bridges, and the budget did nothing to help them. No new money was announced to cope with their demands, and the roads and bridges are in a dire state of repair. This was entirely brought on by the province when it decided to load many social services on to the municipal tax base. It is hard for rural municipalities to make ends meet. It's time the government realized that immediately and injected some cash into the facilities so the municipalities can provide the services they were used to.

On the agriculture scene, long-promised made-in-Ontario safety nets have not been mentioned once in the budget. The farmers in my riding have waited a long time to see a program introduced that will allow them to better compete on the world market. The farm bill passed in the US is going to make it even harder for farmers to compete unless the government steps up on this issue. It's my understanding that there's a meeting this week. I hope something good will come out of that meeting, because the farmers need that.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): I do have to point out two positives in the budget. One is the tax exemption for biodiesel. I think that's going to go a long way. I know that came out of the all-party alternative fuels committee, and I think that was a positive move for the agricultural community.

The other thing I want to say is that I was pleased to see there's an increase in both operating and capital funding for the Ontario Archives. The Ontario Archives plays such an important role in preserving the past for future generations and we can't allow our records to deteriorate.

But let's talk about some of the bad things in this budget: the straight tax grab that you implemented with this tobacco tax hike. What's so irresponsible on the part of this government is that if you were going to raise the taxes on tobacco, why didn't you allocate those dollars and put them into smoking cessation programs? Why didn't you put those dollars into the communities that you're going to inflict economic harm on down in the tobacco belt? But no, you didn't do that. You abandoned the farmers and you abandoned smokers. All you did was you wanted that money to pay for your tax cuts.

Let's talk about some of the other issues that were lacking in this budget, like education. You know, school boards all across this province are struggling right now. Tonight, the Thames Valley District School Board is debating whether or not to pass a deficit budget. I think they're going to follow suit with what Hamilton and Ottawa have done because they recognize that this province is underfunding school boards.

Look at what Maggie and John Ker of St Thomas had to say. They've very concerned and they are urging the Thames Valley school board to present a deficit budget, which will allow them to preserve such services as guidance and library support. These individuals are concerned about their son and the fact that he's not going to have these services in the school. Students should come first, but students don't come first with this government. I think that's a real disgrace. There are a lot of parents like Maggie and John out there who are very concerned about the direction this government is going in its continued underfunding of the education system.

Now let's talk a little bit about health care. We've heard a number of different comments made about increases, of new dollars going into health care. I would urge the members and the Minister of Health to have a look at what he's doing to the St Thomas-Elgin General Hospital. He has forced this hospital to make cuts that are

going to hurt the community. Because of the chronic underfunding by this government, this hospital is making some drastic, major, radical reductions to outpatient rehabilitative services. This government is forcing the residents of Elgin county to turn to the private sector, because these individuals don't have third-party insurance and there is no other schedule 5 OHIP rehab facility in the county. So either you're going to have to turn to the private sector or you're going to force elderly and vulnerable families to travel to London for schedule 5 OHIP rehab services that aren't going to be provided in their own backyard.

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I think it's totally irresponsible that this government and this Minister of Health, Tony Clement, would allow this to happen, because you're really putting the citizens of St Thomas and Elgin county at an extreme disadvantage. You wash your hands of it and say, "We give the hospital an envelope of money and it's a hospital board decision." But it's a decision that's coming from you, because you approved it. You approved the hospital operation review and its recovery plan. You knew darn well that that hospital was cutting out those rehab services and you allowed it to happen. These poor citizens in Elgin county are being put into the backwaters of this province because of this government, and you are allowing it to happen.

You've got a former Tory member in that area who stands up and makes all kinds of grandiose comments. Well, I'd like to say, if this government is playing politics with hospitals in this province and saying, "Because you've got a Liberal member, we're going to underfund that hospital," then there's something seriously wrong with government in this province. You have cut this hospital's budget and you're hurting the citizens of St Thomas and Elgin county. And you know what? You don't care. We've got thousands and thousands of names on petitions, and you disregard what they've got to say. You should be totally ashamed of yourself.

The Premier has talked about the ability to access services in your own backyard, but you know what's happened? You can't access these services in your own backyard because you're allowing a hospital and a hospital board to cut these services out.

You've done other things too. We've seen the delisting of audiology services. You don't realize. Can't you get through your thick skulls on the other side the long-term harm and damage you're doing to young people in this province because you're cutting these services out?

This budget is not helping people; this budget is hurting people.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Christopherson: I enjoyed very much the comments of the members from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh and Elgin-Middlesex-London.

The member from Elgin-Middlesex-London, in closing, was talking about health care. Yesterday I was speaking to a new local of SEIU. This is one of the unions that is leading the charge to save our public health

care system, and that's difficult to do on the national level when we've got a provincial government that is still not doing its part.

Interjection.

Mr Christopherson: I grant you the feds could be doing a lot more, I join you in that, but at some point you've got to take responsibility for your culpability here. I think that's what the member was talking about, and certainly that's what SEIU is all about in terms of fighting for the jobs and services they care about.

Also, the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London talked about the need for support for agriculture. I represent Hamilton West, but the new city of Hamilton includes a large piece of the agricultural business in Ontario. The only thing I can see in this budget for agriculture is that you've said that municipalities can set the tax rate for farmlands at 25% below the residential tax rate. That's good, that's fine, it's going to be helpful to those farmers at the local level, but again, you're not footing the bill. It's easy for you to say, "Municipalities, we're going to let you collect 25% less." How do they make up the money? You don't say that. Yes, you can talk about the fact that agriculture has been helped a bit by virtue of this, but it's the municipalities again that are going to pay the price. At some point, you've got to put some money where your mouth is and stop downloading all the responsibilities to municipalities and leaving them with no funds to provide those services.

Mr Wetlaufer: It's really interesting listening to the Liberals opposite speaking about health care. I think we should point out that in the Liberal red book in 1995, they said they were going to maintain health care spending at \$17.4 billion a year. Well, since 1995 to now, we've increased spending in health care in the province of Ontario to \$25.5 billion in this latest budget. I want to point out that this includes, this year, a 7.7% increase for hospitals, which will increase the funding for hospitals to \$9.4 billion.

I want to explain something else. The Canada Health Act does not include long-term care; it does not include pharmaceutical care. Do you know something? Home care is not contributed to by the federal government, not one cent. The federal government does not contribute one cent to home care in the province of Ontario—or any other province, for that matter.

Additionally, do you remember, Speaker—I'm sure you must; you're as old as I am—back in the 1960s, when medicare was brought into this country, the federal government agreed to fund health care to the tune of 50% of all health costs? Well, in 1995, the federal government was paying 18% of health costs in the province of Ontario. Now they're paying 14%. The net cost to the Ontario treasury of that shortfall is about \$18 billion. Imagine what the province of Ontario could do with another \$18 billion for health care for the people of this province if the federal government would pony up its share.

Mr Gravelle: I certainly want to compliment the members from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh and

Elgin-Middlesex-London, both very hard-working members who fight very hard for their constituents.

I would like to focus, for a moment, on the issue that the government has now made it very, very clear that they intend to allow—in fact, encourage—the opening of MRI private clinics, privately run, privately operated, which I have some very real concerns about, simply from the point of view of actual costs. But what alarms me, from specific concerns of my constituents in Thunder Bay-Superior North, is that we do have an MRI in Thunder Bay Regional Hospital which we're very glad to have. We now in fact have five radiologists, which is tremendous considering the challenge we've had finding those radiologists. We have enough technicians to quite frankly fund this particular public MRI so that we can serve the needs of our constituents. It concerns me that they're talking about setting up private labs when indeed they're not even remotely properly funding the MRI public labs or the labs that are in place. Surely that makes sense: to properly fund the MRI clinics and the CT scans that are in place, to make sure they're doing so.

What's happening, certainly in my constituency, is, despite the best efforts of those people who are running the MRI lab in Thunder Bay and the fact they've expanded the hours as much as possible, we still have very, very long waiting lists for care. Certainly when I speak to the people who run the clinic in Thunder Bay, they've made it very, very clear to me that they would like nothing more than to be able to expand those hours further.

So I certainly say to the government, we saw some money in the budget, it appears, for MRIs, and I hope that indeed is going to be to increase the operating funds that are available to the public hospital MRIs that are in place. Those people who are waiting for a diagnosis and are living in some fear—they have to wait six months or have to go somewhere else in order to get that quick diagnosis—would be, I think, expecting this government to properly fund the publicly run MRIs as it is.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I would like to congratulate the two speakers for their comments on this debate. It's unfortunate they only had 10 minutes between the two of them because of the rule changes. I know on a budget debate there's a whole bunch of issues they would have liked to have gotten to. For example, the issue we raised over here this afternoon in the Legislature—both my colleague the member from Hamilton West and myself raised the issue of what's happening with school board funding. We've now got in Ottawa and we've now got in Hamilton boards that are basically defying the government, and my hat's off to them, in saying, "We don't have enough money to provide the basic service to our students, and the government's putting us in the position of either taking services away or running a deficit." Those boards—and it's a courageous step, I've got to say—in Hamilton and in Ottawa decided that they're going to run a deficit in order to get some attention from the government to try to deal with the issue. I'm sure it's not going to be the only board to take that position.

Then I raised the example of two school boards in my riding—the English public board, which is put in the awful position of having to overcome an over-\$4-million deficit by making decisions such as taking almost \$1 million out of special-needs education. Do you think those school board trustees want to do that? Not for a second, and I don't believe most of us as members, if we were sitting in those trustees' seats at that board, would want to make those kinds of decisions. Then I've got the French Catholic board, which is having to make a decision about possibly closing a school entirely in a community, leaving that community with no school whatsoever, so that those kids would have to be transported great distances to another community to get to school.

I'm just saying to the government across the way by way of this budget debate—I know members would want to have spoken to that, but they didn't have enough time; certainly the member from Ottawa understands that quite well—you've got to give the school boards the dollars they need to provide the service. If you're going to centrally control the curriculum and you're going to centrally control everything that happens in a Stalinistic way, you've got to give those people the money to do the job. Otherwise, return the control to the boards.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Cleary: I would like to thank the members from Hamilton West, Kitchener Centre, Thunder Bay and Timmins-James Bay. The member from Hamilton West had spoken about lowering the tax on farmland by 25%. I know in his area, and probably my area too, the municipalities are hit very hard now, because they've got a whole lot of other things: ambulance service, infrastructure, sewer and water, roads. In my municipality, they didn't have the money to build a bridge to an agricultural farm so they had to close the bridge because they had no money. That just shows you the problems we have.

The other thing too that's a big issue in our community is the shortage of nurses. The government paid out a lot of severance money to people they laid off, and they got rid of our nurses, and now we're suffering. In my community, a lot of the nurses happen to be working in the United States.

The other thing the member talked about was the MRIs. It's great to have them in a community. Anyway, I guess we've all got to work together on that to make sure we provide a service for the community.

The other thing I want to say is about the school board funding, which is a big issue in my community, and community schools in rural Ontario—and the doctor shortage and what the health care restructuring commission did to my community. A lot of people there will never forgive them for that, because they set the community back a lot of years, coming in and overruling a decision that was made by the community.

The Acting Speaker: It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

The House adjourned at 1803.

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