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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 6 May 2003

Mardi 6 mai 2003

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 6 May 2003

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

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The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 5, 2003, on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is there a quorum?

The Acting Speaker (Mr Michael A. Brown): Is there a quorum present?

Deputy Clerk (Ms Deborah Deller): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Deputy Clerk: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: A quorum now being present, the member for Beaches-East York.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): Yesterday evening I was partway through my speech, about six minutes, and I was talking about what I thought some of the highlights of the throne speech were and some of those things in the throne speech that were commendable.

I think the most commendable part of the entire throne speech was hit when the government was talking about the provisions around drunk driving. I must commend the members opposite, because I think that is one part of the throne speech that almost everyone can agree with. If you are caught drunk driving once, I guess anyone could put it down to a mistake, but if you are caught a second time, that surely should be the end. To give a third time, as the present legislation allows, is beyond what most people in society think goes to fairness. So to reduce it to twice is a move in the right direction. Of the entire throne speech, for me that was the thing you got best, and I congratulate you for that.

There were other things in the throne speech I'm going to just gloss over, which I think are deserving of comment. One of the problems is when we get into the Conservative request that there be an education rebate for seniors. No one would deny that our seniors have worked very hard in this province. They have defended us in times of war; they have put their children through school; they have built a society and communities across Ontario of which we are all very proud. There is no doubt that many of them are deserving of some kind of rebate because some seniors—not most, but some seniors—find

themselves in very poor pecuniary circumstances. What has been proposed, though, I would suggest has gone too far.

What has been proposed is that all seniors, regardless of their income, be the subject of having tax rebates around education. With the greatest of respect, that seems to me to have gone too far, for a government such as your own to look to the demographics and to see who is likely to support you and then to reward them. They will be getting an average, according to your own figures, of some \$427 a year, that \$427 to be taken off the taxes for their homes. We could agree, perhaps, if \$427 was the maximum or if \$427 was a reasonable figure, but what you have failed to do and what I think you need to do by the time this legislation comes forward is to cap it, because it seems that many, many people in this province will find it untoward and unacceptable that people like Frank Stronach, who is himself above 65 years of age and lives in a \$5-million house, will get some \$20,000 or so in tax rebates from this government. Surely that money is needed for education. Surely no one in this province would think that a kind of legislation that allows such blanket reductions, even for those people who do not require it, do not need it and, I would suggest, have not even asked for it, has gone far too far.

1850

I look too at what is in the legislation, and we find some other anomalies, some things that I think are deserving of comment. I know, because the government members stood to their feet and gave the loudest ovation, not for the nurses and doctors and the people who have been out there to battle SARS, but for sending some of our police officers to Iraq. I don't know how many people have stopped to think about this or whether this is good government policy for a provincial government in Canada to make this one of the key hallmarks of a throne speech debate. It was only in subsequent days we found out that it was not entire detachments or the denuding of towns of their police services, but in fact it would only be four police officers that would go off to Iraq. I am not convinced that this is a provincial mandate and I am not convinced for a moment that those four officers would not be better served in the towns and cities and on the highways of Ontario. It is all very well for this government to announce that there are going to be some 1,000 new police officers. That's not bad; it brings it almost back to where they were in 1995. It's not bad, and I think people would respect that we need more police officers in our communities. We have people who are frightened to go on the streets. They need to be reassured. We have

people who break, with impunity sometimes, the laws on our highways. They need to be stopped. I would suggest that even four more police officers in Canada, in Ontario, in our towns and cities, is preferable to those police officers being sent to foreign jurisdictions, however much good they may or may not do.

What's not in the throne speech is the most troubling to me. What is not in the throne speech is any talk about the towns or cities or urban infrastructure of Ontario. There is nothing in here that will talk—

Hon Helen Johns (Minister of Agriculture and Food): What about Smart Growth?

Mr Prue: Smart Growth. OK, I've been asked, "What about Smart Growth?" Yes, there's a little tiny bit in there about Smart Growth. So let's talk about Smart Growth. With all the greatest of respect to Mayor McCallion, who was my friend and colleague for many years as we sat on the mayors' conferences going around Toronto and in the GTA and where we agreed on a great many things, the Smart Growth proposals are made in a way that they are done by consensus. Consensus is not always a bad thing, but what the consensus has done in this particular case is water down what is absolutely necessary. It has watered it down because the politicians and the developers of course cannot always agree, nor can ordinary people agree with what is going to happen to their communities.

In fact, what is happening to their communities is that cities have really been left out of this whole equation. There is absolutely nothing new in terms of transit. The government says they give a couple billion or \$3 billion in transit money as if this is new. Governments used to give much more than that on a yearly basis, not on a five-year basis, to mature systems like the Toronto Transit Commission. That is devoid here. This is no longer here. You have mature cities such as Hamilton, Toronto and Ottawa literally hemorrhaging from a lack of money in transit. You have cities where potholes are now more common in the streets. You have no funding mechanism that is set out here, whether it be a portion of the gas tax or a forgiveness of the provincial sales tax, that people are starting to talk about in the need to rejuvenate our cities.

There is nothing in here about the homeless. There is nothing in here about building new homes for people who are in financial difficulties, for people who cannot afford the rents in some of our larger cities. We know that rents in Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa and London, Ontario have started to increase to proportions where people can no longer afford to live in the apartments they once occupied. We know that rents today have gone up to well in excess of \$1,000 for a two-bedroom apartment in Toronto and we have economic evictions taking place on almost a daily basis—never mind "almost" on a daily basis, but on a daily basis—by hundreds of people.

We have seen in this province the real need to build affordable housing. We saw in November 2001, all the housing ministers from across Canada and from the Canadian government meet in Quebec City and come

down with a plan to build affordable housing. Then we saw only the province of Quebec—and perhaps Nunavut, if you want to include them as well—that actually came up with the dollars for that province or territory to actually start the construction of affordable housing. It is very sad to say in this province of supposed opportunity that not one home has been built since November under this plan. We have a brand-new Municipal Affairs and Housing minister who has met with his federal counterpart and is now saying that some 2,000 affordable homes are going to be built on a pilot-project basis. How you can have a pilot project for building homes is beyond me. We have been building homes in this city, building homes in this province, for 300 years. We don't need a pilot project to build 2,000 more, and we have very little to learn in how to build them or where to situate them that we do not already know.

There is absolutely nothing in the throne speech that gives hope to anyone who is out there on the streets that they might improve or live in better living circumstances, or to the 90,000 families in Ontario who are on the waiting list for affordable housing or subsidized housing that they will ever, in their lifetime, get into one of those units. We as a province have failed, and this throne speech has failed abysmally to talk about that.

The other night following the throne speech, I had the privilege to attend with Alvin Curling at CITY-TV; it was a program called "Hour Town". We were on for a half-hour. We were talking about the throne speech, the good things about it—and we both mentioned the drunk-driving provisions—but also the bad things about it. There were six callers in that half-hour, and three of them spoke about how they felt betrayed as renters that there was nothing in there about the Tenant Protection Act, nothing that was going to stop them—nothing at all—from getting increases in rents over and over again and again. A woman in some distress phoned from Mississauga saying that it had become impossible for her and her family to afford the rents that were being charged.

I also looked to see what was in there about the environment. This government has had some difficulties in environment over the last number of years, starting of course with Walkerton, but continuing today in this Legislature, when there was talk about firing up diesels for electricity in some of our mature cities in places where great numbers of people live in close proximity to what are now going to be diesel-fired generators.

There is nothing or very little in there about improving the environment or the air quality—nothing much that was said. In fact, what I found most chilling of all was that there were a couple of lines put aside talking about generating electricity and energy from the combustion of garbage. We have gone a long way in this province away from using incinerators and using incinerators to get rid of garbage. This is a lightning rod to many people in the environmental movement. I will tell you, in my own riding of Beaches-East York and in the neighbourhood riding of Toronto-Danforth, there is a growing citizens' movement that is afraid of what is being proposed here

and of what the city of Toronto had in mind when they were trying to relocate these types of incinerators, or the new technology, as they called it, in the Ashbridges Bay area. That has been beaten back for the moment but this throne speech is talking about resurrecting it, and I think we all need to be very nervous about this.

We also need to be very nervous about what was in the throne speech in terms of union-bashing. I mean, this government has a horrible record when it comes to union-management relations. It has a very horrible record with the teachers, it has a horrible record with the farm workers and it has a horrible record, quite frankly, with almost the entire unionized force in this province. What we saw here was an attempt to categorize the unions as undemocratic and to try to say that some major changes were going to take place in what can only be described, I would put out to you, as a very democratic institution where people have the right, every year or so, to elect their leaders. People have the right to remove them. People have the right to attend meetings. I, for one, wonder why this bashing continues. I wonder why the government is pushing these kinds of hot buttons, except we know of course that an election is coming. I would suggest that on the basis of what is in this throne speech, an election should be called sooner rather than later. If these are the best ideas you have, I would suggest you bring them out to the public and let the public decide if this is the direction Ontario needs to go in.

1900

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): I'm pleased to stand in my place tonight and join in the debate with the member from Beaches-East York. I'm going to have the opportunity to speak to the throne speech a little bit later this evening and basically tell the people of Ontario, in particular the people of northern Ontario, what it means to them. There are some great initiatives in here for the people of northern Ontario. I'm eager to be able to stand in my place a little bit later and tell the people of northern Ontario what it means to them.

I listened very closely to the member speak. One of his points was 1,000 new police officers to help our communities be a safe place to live and work and raise a family. I can tell you in northern Ontario we live in one of the safest places in the province. Our crime rates are down thanks to the North Bay Police Service and the OPP that service our area. The fact that we're bolstering the law enforcement by 1,000 new police officers can only speak well to the future. Obviously, we are seeing crime rates go down, in particular, in the north. This is only going to further reduce crime. That's good news for families raising young children so that they have the confidence to go out in the evening to soccer games or hockey games. It's a safe place to live.

It's a privilege to stand here, as we all know as MPPs, and represent our areas. Of course, I represent Nipissing and Mr Prue represents his area. I understand he arrived at Queen's Park a few months before I did, so Mr Prue and I are kind of rookies here in the Legislature. I will be

able to get a little bit more time a little later this evening to go over again what the throne speech means to the people of northern Ontario.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I'm pleased to stand and make comments about the speech from the member for Beaches-East York, and I thank him for his comments. Certainly, he showed some of the weaknesses of the speech from the throne. I'd like to highlight and reinforce some of the things he said.

Listen, the speech from the throne was lacking. It was lacking a vision; it was lacking clarity; it was lacking a direction—I think all of which the people of Ontario want.

The Sudbury Star today wrote an editorial. The Sudbury Star is normally a friendly paper to the Progressive Conservative government. The Sudbury Star today said that the throne speech lacked vision, that what it didn't do was set a direction for the people of Ontario, and because of that, this government should call the election. When you're getting editorials like this, they reflect the thinking across Ontario, the thinking in Beaches-East York, the thinking in North Bay certainly, and the thinking in Sudbury. I am concerned that the speech from the throne clearly didn't set an agenda for northern Ontario. We have suffered since 1995 in northern Ontario because this government didn't provide a vision for northern Ontario. This government clearly has destroyed the quality health care that we had in northern Ontario. The speech from the throne provided no optimism for the people in Sudbury who are waiting for this government to bring a cheque for \$160 million so that we can get our hospital back on track so that we can begin the construction. There is much weakness in this speech, and I agree very much with what the member from Beaches-East York said.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): I'm very pleased to rise this evening and commend my colleague from Beaches-East York. I think the members will agree, if they're being non-partisan, that you probably won't find a more thoughtful and thought-through analysis of anything that's in front of us than that which you'll get from the member from Beaches-East York. I appreciate that government members, in particular, may not agree with his conclusions. But I don't think that anyone would argue that he doesn't take the time to read the material, and not only do the research, but apply it to his own experience, which in the area of municipalities, in particular, is extremely vast. I think, again, that we've seen a reflection of the kind of solid work that he does on behalf of this caucus and his constituents.

I want to just underscore what I think is one of the most blatant partisan aspects to the throne speech, and that's the whole issue of the property tax credit for seniors. I don't think there's anything more transparent in terms of showing what this government does and how they go about it. They will talk endlessly about wanting to help seniors, about giving them money back, about the work that they've done to build our society—all the things that we believe in, which are true. But let's take it

the next step and look exactly at what it means. It means that, on average, the average senior will get \$427 a year. Well, for some seniors, 427 bucks is going to make a difference, and they'll appreciate it. But let's take a look at the whole program. A \$250,000 home gets \$670. That's not a lot of money for a home. But jump to \$2.5 million and you're getting 6,700 bucks. If you go to Frank Stronach, the best example at \$5 million, he's going to get 20 grand. So it's just one more way of giving somebody who doesn't need taxpayers' support and subsidy 20 grand of money that he didn't earn.

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): It's a pleasure to be able to rise for a few moments to discuss the throne speech.

I think that one of the important things that people recognize about the throne speech is the importance of the message with regard to the economy. Too often, people look at one particular program, one particular aspect, and don't see the fact that each is connected to the other. Everything rests on a strong economy. Everything rests on the ability for each person in this province who is able-bodied and able, then, to have a job. That is the first step. Those things, then, that add to our quality of life are the kinds of programs that are ensured in the throne speech that looks at providing monies and continued support for quality health care and education.

I think that people need to see the connection between those initiatives that are in the throne speech that speak to maintaining a strong economy, an opportunity for everyone to be able to have a job, and providing for the programs that we value and the programs that continue to support our quality of life. That's what this throne speech is all about.

It does include further tax cuts and it does include further commitment to priority areas of spending, whether we're talking about health care, education or adding the 1,000 new police officers to our province. It's all connected.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Prue: I thank the members from North Bay, Sudbury, Hamilton West and York North.

I guess, in the two minutes, I would just like to speak about the comments from the member from York North. In fact, yes, this is about the economy. Yes, it is about how money is being spent. But, with respect, the money that is needed to be spent in areas such as education and health care that you talk about is simply not there, and it is not contained within the throne speech. We know, yesterday, the bond rating service yesterday questioned whether or not this government has a balanced budget because no one has said where the \$2.2 billion in asset sales is going to come from, and whether there is any plan at all. We know that the government representatives have said you are not going to sell Hydro. We have no idea what other asset sales could possibly be sold off. Could it be Algonquin Park? I don't know. I don't know what you could sell for \$2.2 billion or what you intend to do to balance the economy. The problem with that is, where does the money come from for health care and all

of the problems that are related around home care and hospitals that have insufficient staff?

1910

Education is even worse. From your own throne speech, you talk about allowing people to choose schools for their children and travel at distances. That's not the answer. The answer isn't to send them to the best schools in a particular region or area. The option, and what you should be choosing, is to make all of the schools excellent, so that there's not a flight from poor areas to rich areas. That's what you should be doing. You should be including English as a second language; you should be including instructors; you should be including problems with the double cohort. It's simply not there and it needs to be.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr McDonald: It's an honour as the MPP for Nipissing to stand in my place tonight and speak about the throne speech. What is a throne speech and what does it mean to ordinary Ontarians? I did a consultation in my riding one evening and we had a fairly good turnout of individuals. That question was raised: what is a throne speech and what does it mean? From what I've gathered from that and what I saw here in the Legislature, the throne speech is a direction or a vision of the province of Ontario. What does it mean to our young people, our seniors, our families? What benefits do they have? What does the government of Ontario actually do?

Of course, my focus has always been northern Ontario, because that's where I'm from. I'm very proud to be a northerner. I was very pleased that through our consultation we sent down our results to the Premier, and we were thrilled that a lot of it made it into the throne speech. I might add, as everyone is concerned at home, health care and education are very important, but so are jobs and retaining youth in the north. That is crucial to us to build our northern communities to provide opportunities for our young people to stay in northern Ontario.

I was very pleased to hear that tax incentive zones are being proposed throughout the province of Ontario, in particular in northern Ontario. As Toronto felt in the last month or so of reduced tourism, we feel that too. We feel there's a lack of business opportunities, although it does seem to be improving the last little while. We're just thrilled that the Premier has supported northern Ontario. He has shown that he has a vision for northern Ontario. He's shown that he supports seniors, our young people, and our young people with disabilities.

I mentioned the tax incentive zones. What that really means to the people who don't really understand—a lot of business people would understand in the sense that two or three days out of their week they deal with government forms, agencies and taxes. A tax incentive zone will level the playing field for northern Ontario so that businesses and industries elsewhere in the world will see northern Ontario as a viable alternative to locate. Obviously, we have the workforce there, we have the resources, we have very inexpensive land in the north. We have leadership, we have dedicated people and we

have bilingual individuals willing to work. We have a lot to offer in northern Ontario to the world. I think this idea of a tax incentive zone—I fought particularly hard for Nipissing and northern Ontario as well, because I think all of northern Ontario should share in the great news of a tax incentive zone. We'll see what happens on this issue in the weeks or months to come.

I remember during my campaign, just over a year ago, I was on a radio show and I got a call from an individual who happened to be in a wheelchair. He asked a question which was very important to him. His income had been fixed for quite a while and he wanted to know if there was anything we could do to help him out. I was very pleased to hear that there will be an increase to the Ontario disability support program for individuals with disabilities, so that they might be able to lead a little bit better lives. I was very pleased to see that in the throne speech. I think that spoke to what Premier Eves has said all along. He envisions a province that he'll consult with, listen to and get ideas and feedback from. I think what you saw here is a government that realizes that we need to be inclusive. I think that's what this throne speech was all about. It was very inclusive. It invited for the first time ever, I believe, the opinions and thoughts and concerns of ordinary Ontarians, not just MPPs, but everyone in the province. If you saw the throne speech, it really was a list of the concerns and issues for the people of Ontario.

I heard the member for Sudbury speak about there being nothing in the throne speech for northern Ontario. The Premier has already said he's going to do Highway 69, which I think is a benefit to Sudbury. We're seeing aggressive four-laning of Highway 11, which I'm continually trying to push. Hopefully we can get it four-laned in the next four or five years. But there are so many things.

I heard one of the members speak about tax cuts for seniors. I would call it tax relief more than tax cuts. It's a tax credit for seniors who live in their houses. When I was on the council in the city of North Bay, I heard from many senior citizens. Obviously municipal taxes go up two or three points every year. I heard from a lot of senior citizens who stated that they were fearful they couldn't stay in their own homes because costs were going up.

I have to applaud Premier Eves for saying to the seniors, "You built our communities. You built our province, and here is an opportunity for you to stay in your home with this property tax credit." I can tell you that this was an initiative that, as a member of the council, was a great idea that I fully support. I understand the official opposition is voting against the tax relief for seniors. That's their prerogative, I guess. I support this initiative for seniors. I don't want to name names, but I did hear from quite a few seniors as a councillor, and they wanted some tax relief. I applaud that.

I want to talk about the northern Ontario medical school. This is the first government in 30 years to open a medical school, and we're opening it in the north. I think

that's great news for northern Ontario, because the stats show that if we can train our doctors and nurses in the north, they will have the opportunity to stay there, and want to stay there. The way of life in the north is great. We have fresh air, fresh lakes, rivers and lots of green spaces that we have to enjoy.

Looking further at the northern medical school, I was also very pleased to learn—and I thought this was just a great idea—that there will be free tuition for doctors and nurses beginning practices in northern and rural areas. That shows leadership. Sometimes you people here in Toronto don't realize what it's like for the rest of us in the province. The fact that we have this opportunity to attract and retain doctors and nurses is a good thing.

We're building a new \$212-million regional health facility in the city of North Bay. There's a new hospital going into Mattawa. I can talk about the communities that I serve having really benefited, and I support them. I'm not trying to take credit for it because I don't deserve to take credit. But the fact that they are there shows the commitment of this government in the health care field in the north. These new hospitals obviously will be a little more efficient. They could also attract specialists and young doctors to the north because now they have the facilities and the equipment that other areas have enjoyed.

1920

I had the opportunity a couple of months ago to participate in the first robotic surgery in the world. There was Dr McKinley and Dr Anvari. Dr Anvari was in Hamilton and Dr McKinley was in North Bay and they did this robotic surgery through the telephone lines and the computer systems. It was the first time in the world that it's ever been done. We were just thrilled at the fact that here is this technology that's available for doctors and nurses in the north. And it's also an opportunity to train doctors in the north, because when you think about it, if a doctor wants to learn a particular surgery, he might have to travel to Toronto and train, and obviously we're taking him out of the system and all the expenses. But now we have the opportunity through robotic surgery and telemedicine that these doctors can be trained in procedures within their own communities through this system. I think that speaks very well to innovation in the health field, innovation in the north. The fact that a northern doctor participated shows that the expertise is there. So all we have to be able to do is provide the tools for these individuals so they can teach. I think the thought is to learn, teach, and the next person does the same thing, so you can imagine as it gets going.

The other part of the health care field that's pretty exciting for us in the north is not all these new hospitals and the fact there is free tuition for doctors and nurses but the new Electronic Child Health Network North. When you think about it, you're going to ask, "What exactly is that?" That provides an opportunity for families that have young kids who might need a specialist down here at Sick Kids but who live in North Bay or Timmins or Sault Ste Marie—if their local physician takes an X-ray, this

X-ray automatically is in at Sick Kids. So the specialist at Sick Kids can look at the X-ray at the same time the physician in, let's say, North Bay is looking at it, without the trauma, the travelling and taking off work to come to a conclusion on what is best for the treatment of that child.

You can imagine: here is a family with a young child who needs some care. They don't have to take a four-hour trip down to Toronto, rent a hotel room, pay for meals and take off time from work—and the fact that there's a lot of anxiety there. The specialist can look at the X-ray at the same time and give his recommendations to the local physician.

I think that's great news. I can't wait until that's announced in northern Ontario. I think it will be very exciting for everyone who lives in northern Ontario to do this.

I just want to talk about education for a few minutes. We're very fortunate in the riding of Nipissing to have two great post-secondary institutions, one being Nipissing University. By the way, the president, Dr David Marshall, was just nominated as citizen of the year for North Bay in 2002, and we're having a dinner for him on May 15. The counterpart, obviously, is Canadore College, which is well known in the north. These are two institutions that have done so much for our students in the north. When we think of jobs and economic development, we don't often think of colleges and universities as that tool. I can tell you that the employment rates at Nipissing and Canadore keep going up and up. As we attract more students to the north—and Nipissing University had an over 200% increase in enrolment applications—each student to our community, let's say North Bay or Mattawa or Callander, represents \$14,000 to \$15,000 a year per student. You can imagine that if we have 800, 900, 1,000 or 2,000 students, each student represents an economic return to our community of \$14,000 to \$15,000.

Each professor, secretary, assistant, scientist—they all add to our economic development. Do you know what? It's a clean industry; there is no pollution. When we see an increase, it speaks very well to the leadership at Nipissing University; it speaks very well to the leadership at Canadore College. It also speaks very well of our communities in the north, that people will come to them. I run into individuals all the time who have been educated at Nipissing University and are thrilled that they have been able to find a job in the north, but not enough of them have the ability to stay.

I believe this is what this throne speech was talking about, how we keep our youth and provide opportunities for them to stay in the north, because we've seen a population decrease in the north over the last couple of years. Mind you, some of it's just because families are having fewer children, so the numbers will go down automatically. But the real concern and the real issue are opportunities for our young people to stay. That's crucial to building our northern economies, our northern communities. Everybody wants to be near their family, near

their grandparents. As these young people move away from northern Ontario, of course there is quite a distance. What we need to do is provide opportunities so that they might be able to stay there.

Speaking about education and health care, I was very pleased to see the Premier and the government are going to invest \$1 billion in the new Cancer Research Institute of Ontario. I did a quick little survey of all the members here, and I believe the stat was one in three or one in four individuals or their extended families have been touched by cancer. We found only one member on this side whose family wasn't touched by cancer, which speaks to the fact that probably most of us are, through this deadly disease. If you want to speak about a vision, if you want to speak about a direction for the people of Ontario, what better idea than to invest \$1 billion to maybe find a cure for this deadly disease? That is a vision that is speaking to families with grandparents, parents with young children, that will directly affect them and make their lives better.

That, to me, is leadership direction and shows that this government has a heart for families, for people who are probably going through tough times. With everything that's going on in the world today, when we're pulled in 1,000 different directions, isn't it nice to know that the government of Ontario is looking after the people of Ontario? It is providing things that normally when we pick up the newspaper, we wouldn't even read about, but it shows that good things are happening in Ontario and great things are happening in northern Ontario. Premier Eves is from the north and actually represented the riding just south of my riding. He knows what the issues of northern Ontario are all about. I've seen the vision. We've all seen the throne speech and it speaks very well to northern Ontario.

As elected officials here at Queen's Park, elected officials at council or even at the federal level, it's our responsibility to make decisions on behalf of society and what direction society's going in. The throne speech speaks to direction. It speaks to leadership and vision of a province, of communities. When we think of our province, it's kind of like thinking of the universe. If we think of our small communities and how it relates to them, I think it speaks very well to what Premier Eves is trying to do, what this government's trying to do.

As elected officials, we're all honoured to represent our ridings, our regions, our communities. When I talk to members on this side of the House, I can tell you that they're very committed to what they're doing, very committed to their communities, to the families they represent. As the individuals on the other side of the House know, it can be a very thankless job at times. You seem to be the face of every problem that comes forward and it tends to be your fault. But I can also tell you that there are individuals out there who appreciate the effort elected officials make on behalf of their constituents.

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When I make presentations to our local councils, whether it be Bonfield, Mattawa, Callander, Trout Creek

or Powassan, I always start my presentation off by thanking them for giving up their valuable time, their family time, their free time to represent their communities, to make their communities a little bit better than they were. We, as elected officials here at Queen's Park, are basically trying to do the same thing: we're trying to make our communities, our province, a little bit better than they were last year. Really, that's what we speak to. We speak to the fact that we spend a lot of evenings in this place. We're here till 9:30 tonight. A lot of us started at 8 o'clock this morning. So we put in long hours.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): Eight o'clock?

Mr McDonald: Some start maybe a little earlier. We're here because we believe in what we're trying to do. We believe we can make a difference. We believe we can make decisions so that our kids or our grandkids will have a better, safer place to live.

Speaking of the province of Ontario, it's leading the country in economic development; it's leading the country in jobs. It is a very great place to live. If you travelled around the world, I think you'd come back and say, "You know, the province of Ontario is one of the best places to live."

I know I've run out of time. I'd love the opportunity to have more time later.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): I would like to open my remarks with the statement that I agree with something the member from Nipissing said: that we all come to this room, to this Legislature, very proud of the people and the communities we represent. I certainly am very proud of every community in the riding of Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

Mr Gerretsen: Which communities?

Mrs Dombrowsky: Well, there are some wonderful communities. Listen, to begin to name them would mean that I would leave out a few. But I would suggest that's perhaps where my agreement with Mr McDonald ends.

He would suggest that we all work very hard here, and I don't dispute that. But I would only remind the members of the government that we on this side of the House would like to work a lot harder. We think it is offensive that your Premier decided to take a 138-day break. From the time the House last sat in December, it took him 138 days to decide to return to this Legislature to do the business of the people of Ontario.

With respect to the statements the member made about what the throne speech would have in store for seniors of the province with regard to their education taxes, I would only remind them that this government has not even followed through on the education tax breaks they promised two years ago. So I say to the seniors in Ontario, be very wary, because if they are no better at following through on the education tax cuts for you than they have been for everyone else in Ontario, you could be waiting a very long time. I would also remind the seniors of Ontario to remember that this is the government which

has raised the copayments for seniors in long-term-care facilities by 15%.

Mr Christopherson: I want to compliment the member from Nipissing for creating such an interesting story for us. It's a little early for bedtime, but I think it would be quite appropriate, given that it had a nice little flow to it, especially the part where most of it was made up, in my humble opinion, especially the references in the throne speech to the budget and how well they've managed the economy and—get ready for the applause—the fifth balanced budget. Right?

Hon Mrs Johns: Whoo-hoo.

Mr Christopherson: There we go, see? Give them their prompt and they're right on cue.

Just to put it on the record, the finance minister said, "We have a balanced budget. We've done it five years in a row. We're going to continue to do it." It really would be something if it were accurate. But it's not just me, it's not just the NDP caucus, and it's not even just the Liberal caucus. Who indeed is saying that they don't have a balanced budget? It's the Dominion Bond Rating Service. We know, at the end of the day, that if ever there's a non-partisan measurement of what's going on in your economy, it's going to be these bond rating agencies, because they don't really give a tinker's dam who the government is. What they care about is what the level of confidence is in the return for investments made in a local economy.

This government of course wants to go on and on about all their balanced budgets. But what does the Dominion Bond Rating Service say? Quote: "Once again, unspecified asset sales were used to balance the budget ... turning the balanced budget forecast into a deficit of \$1.9 billion. ..." Remember the last election? You sold the 407 and used all that money in one year to pay for your election promises, and we've lost the value of that. Same thing: you want to sell off \$2 billion to create a phony impression of a balanced budget.

Mrs Margaret Marland (Mississauga South): It's great to have a lecture from my dear friend David Christopherson from Hamilton, because I remember, David, when you were in the cabinet of former Premier Bob Rae and you thought it would be a very good thing to sell the rolling stock of GO Transit. Not only that; you went to Bermuda, as I recall.

Mr Christopherson: Me personally?

Mrs Marland: Not you personally, but your government. I can't recall which minister went, but they went for a very long weekend—a big deal because they sold all the rolling stock of GO Transit. And guess what? All that money came into the treasury, and after the money came into the treasury, you then had to turn around and lease back the rolling stock.

Mr Christopherson: We lost that election, didn't we, Margaret? That was quite a few years ago.

Mrs Marland: Yes, actually you did lose it in 1995 because everybody recognized that that kind of manoeuvring with budgets simply doesn't work.

I would say to my revered colleagues on the other side of the floor this evening that if you can ever in your

wildest imagination, first of all, tell us—and I know what’s happened over the last 18 years, and certainly Minister Runciman knows what’s happened over the last—

Mr Christopherson: Four thousand.

Mrs Marland: —22 years—just tell me when you ever balanced a budget. We’ve balanced it five times—a record in 100 years.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): I appreciate the opportunity to engage in this debate. I’d like to thank the member for his discussion and remind him, as did my colleague here on this side of the House, of what this government has done to some of our senior citizens.

One of the things in my riding that is absolutely pervading right across the spectrum of not just senior citizens is the disgust that all our senior citizens felt, that all our citizens felt, that this government would slap our senior citizens, who are most vulnerable and frail, with a 15% increase on their long-term care as a copayment. That to me represents no respect to our senior citizens whatsoever.

I would also suggest to you that there are an awful lot of senior citizens who have begun to call me to simply say, “You know what? We got those tax dollars for our children to attend school. When they want to take the education tax portion off the property tax—our kids got that money from the senior citizens before them.” They are now saying, “You know what? I’m a grandparent now and I don’t have a problem paying some of my fair share of tax for the education portion of the property tax.” They realize that education is an important issue in our province, one that was dismantled by this government and needs to have that money put back in again, and now you’re telling them they don’t need to pay. Well, they feel compelled to pay their fair share of those taxes.

You did let them down in a promise you made that you didn’t keep when you were going to take a look at removing the taxes on their incomes and make sure they have that stability there. If you don’t do that, you’re not doing it to all senior citizens. As a matter of fact, I want to remind this place that you’re doing it to the senior citizens, not along with them.

Ask CARP what they said about this idea that you floated in this trial balloon. They’ve told you clearly that they want to pay their fair share of this tax, because it’s education and it’s needed for all of us. So shame on you for trying to do that.

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The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr McDonald: I would like to thank the members from Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, Hamilton West, the hard-working member from Mississauga South, and the member from Brant. But let’s be very clear regarding the senior citizens. Let’s just tell the truth.

The fact is, this government in its throne speech is providing a tax credit for senior citizens who, over the years, have faced increased property taxes so that they may be able to stay in their homes. The fact that you

voted against the property tax credit for senior citizens—that was your decision. We wanted you to support it; you voted against it.

So be very clear to the seniors out there. Stand up and say, “We don’t believe that we should give senior citizens a tax credit on their property.” They built our communities and they want to stay in their homes, and you’re voting against it. Just stick to the facts. The fact is, you voted against this tax credit for the senior citizens.

So this government is showing its support for senior citizens. This government has shown that it has support for northern Ontario, and when they roll out these tax incentive zones, it will allow us to retain our youth in the north, so that they may be able to raise families and build communities.

In conclusion, I’ve enjoyed my 20 or 25 minutes that I’ve been able to speak to the throne speech, and I can tell you that I’m proud to be on this side of the House. I’m proud of Premier Ernie Eves and his vision and the direction of the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): I’ll be sharing my time with the member from Brant and the member from Elgin-Middlesex. I want to jump right in quickly, because I do not have too much time.

The throne speech talked about cardiac surgery. It failed to mention, though, the impact of pediatric cardiac surgery. At the Children’s Hospital of Western Ontario in London, the pediatric cardiac surgery unit was shut down and moved to Toronto. A last-minute reprieve at the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa saved it from the same fate, pending a review by Senator Wilbert Keon by April 2003. The deadline was then moved to December 31. Then came SARS.

I thought that it was fitting that the Lieutenant Governor began his speech by talking about the health care crisis posed by SARS. This government has pursued a strategy of centralizing hospital care for many years. If there is any lesson to be learned from the SARS experience, surely it is that centralizing specific medical services in one very large hospital is extremely dangerous in the era of the highly contagious virus that spreads so quickly.

The Minister of Health has acknowledged that cardiac services might have been shut down in the province if the move from the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa had already been made and if Toronto Sick Kids had been closed. During the SARS outbreak, some children scheduled for surgery at Sick Kids in Toronto were sent to CHEO in Ottawa. Had CHEO’s cardiac surgery unit been closed by the government, where would those children have gone for their cardiac surgery? More importantly, would they have survived?

Having come through the health care crisis of SARS, we have now come face to face with the danger that concentrating all resources in one hospital can lead to disastrous results. So it’s imperative to announce right now that this unit will maintain the CHEO pediatric cardiac surgery unit on a permanent basis, and have it stay in Ottawa. End of story.

We've talked about seniors tonight. Some members have mentioned them already. I was pleased to hear the Lieutenant Governor say, "Your government believes that each Ontarian—from the youngest to the oldest—deserves the best, most up-to-date care.... By making record investments in long-term care, increasing home care services ... your government has made it possible for hospitals to direct resources where they are most urgently needed."

However, the reality is somewhat different when it comes to seniors and an essential component of home care services.

A month ago I visited the Unitarian House, a non-profit, non-denominational seniors' residence in my riding. It encourages independent living by offering access to laundry rooms, dining rooms, home care services, as well as an assisted living unit. As a CMHC project, Unitarian House has a rent-geared-to-income program which provides subsidies for about 25% of its residents. The rest pay rents which, according to CMHC, are in the modest range.

When I visited the Unitarian House, Tom Dent, the president of the board of directors, said: "Our need is a home support program that provides homemaking—vacuuming, washing ... floors, doing laundry as well as help with a bath. These services were removed when the program was changed about two years ago. The change has resulted in residents having to go to long-term care (which costs the health care system) because they could not manage to live here without homemaking services (which also cost the health care system—but much less)."

Studies have shown that with effective support, it's possible and cost-effective for a group of seniors to live more independently and to their maximum potential.

Another constituent, Gile LaBine, reiterated the same concern. She wrote to the Premier two weeks ago:

"Home care services in our area have been reduced to personal care, which deals only with direct patient care such as perhaps a bath, changing of bandages, etc. The CCAC no longer provides homemaker services such as washing of clothes, cleaning or meal preparation. Are not such home care services essential, since proper nutrition and hygiene are needed if further complications in an illness are to be avoided?

"Are homemaker services in such circumstances not a priority in preventive care?

"Will the Ontario medicare system restore to the frail elderly, the chronically ill and/or the permanently handicapped the services that provide in the home the proper hygiene and adequate nutrition which are assured under hospital care?

"How will persons who are financially unable to procure such services be provided for?

"We are aware that some persons in Ontario are no doubt financially able, in the event of long-term illness, to provide for themselves both personal care and home maintenance services. But we know of doctors and nurses who are deeply distressed because of insufficient home

care available for patients who are chronically ill or who are handicapped."

The ministry's own Web site says, "Coordinate services for seniors, people with disabilities, people who need health care services in the community to help them live independently in their own home for as long as possible. Staff at the centres provide information and coordinate professional and personal support and homemaking services for people in their own home, and for school children with special needs, and make arrangements for admissions into long-term-care facilities."

But where are the homemaking services? The Council on Aging in Ottawa strongly believes that "care in the home must be recognized as an essential component of the health care system and be provided with adequate resources to meet the rapidly escalating demand for services."

A recent study in British Columbia which followed clients who had house-cleaning services cut concluded, "These simple, cheap services appear to help maintain the elderly person's function and prevent his or her deterioration," the author, Dr Marcus Hollander, stated. "We found that a significant proportion of people seemed to have a health crisis a year or two after their services were cut that ultimately cost the system more. ... By the end of the third year, the difference in total average cost to the health care system was about \$4,000 per person (per year), so clearly, this supposed 'cost-saving' measure was not cost-saving at all."

When we look at that, what is it that should be done? I suggest that the government might want to look the plan that the Liberal Party has put forward. We will invest in home care so that Ontarians can receive better care at home. The Harris-Eves government cut funding and lowered standards. Now, over 115,000 Ontarians are forced to either go without care or receive it in an institution.

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Romanow identified home care as an essential component of modern medicare. Our long-term vision is to make home care a medically necessary service. Our first step is to get our vulnerable and elderly the services they need.

We will remove the arbitrary Harris-Eves limits on home care. If you require care and want it in your home, and that care costs less than sending you to a hospital or nursing home, we will make sure you get it.

The Harris-Eves record on seniors: reduced home care services, forcing the frail and elderly out of their homes and into institutional care; hiked nursing home fees by 15%; removed standards that made sure all nursing home residents received at least 2.25 hours of nursing care daily and three baths per week; allowed nursing homes to operate without licences or regular inspections, as reported by the Provincial Auditor.

We will: cancel the Harris-Eves 15% increase in nursing home fees; set high standards for our nursing homes and regularly inspect them to make sure those standards are being met; strengthen home care so seniors

can stay in their homes as long as possible; support seniors' centres that provide social, recreational, educational and volunteer opportunities that are stimulating to keep the brain active and occupied; improve the Ontario drug benefit program to ensure seniors get the medications they need; improve the Ontario drug benefit program to ensure seniors get the medication they need; help seniors better manage their prescription needs through better family home care, and I could go on and on.

The bottom line is that the Harris-Eves government cut home care and raised nursing home fees. Now they are trying to appease seniors by offering to exempt them from paying educational tax when many of them feel it's an honour to do so.

Access to MRIs: in the speech the government is guaranteeing waiting times for procedures including MRIs. I'd like to quote from Linda Hume-Sastre, who is suffering from multiple illnesses, who copied me in her letter to the Premier about her difficulty in accessing MRIs, "The waiting period for an MRI in Ottawa is now nine to 12 months.

"Frankly, I've given up any hope at all of having regular, timely MRIs. ...

"I find it absolutely unacceptable that I pay taxes in Canada" and Ontario "and cannot obtain the tests that are needed to follow the conditions that I have. I feel totally abandoned by the medical system in Ottawa and in Ontario." She goes on and on.

The throne speech talks a good line, tries to identify a lot of things that this government has contributed to creating in terms of many problems, but doesn't really provide many of the solutions when you go out there and you talk to people. I will stop there.

Mr Levac: I want to thank my colleague for outlining some very important issues that have been talked about quite a bit tonight, and that's the senior citizens. I want to thank him and I know his passion is there. I know that he's outlined our program very well so I'm not going to duplicate it other than to point out a few individual stories. It's a pleasure and an honour to get as little time as I have to talk on this throne speech.

With me I have a copy of the throne speech, the one that was presented to us in the House, and I want to make some references to it. I've also got some other documents in my possession that will make it quite clear that there is a contrast between what is being proposed in this throne speech and what my leader, Dalton McGuinty, and the Liberal caucus are going to be talking about.

I want to talk, right off the bat, about some of the things that I have heard in this place about this throne speech. One of the things that I will quote from in terms of the throne speech is this wonderful statement that they made on page 4, that they will be "refusing to borrow from future generations to pay for today's success." Well, you know what they've done? They've borrowed \$10 billion to give their first round of tax cuts. They've added over \$22 billion to the debt, which they never seem to remind you of. They take an awful lot of glory and praise for five consecutive balanced budgets, but

they borrowed to do it. That means that there is a tremendous amount of money, and I think it is in the hundreds of millions of dollars, that are being spent to pay the cost of that debt.

To tell me that that that's fiscal responsibility is nonsense. They're taking a great, large lump of big pride to simply sit back and say, "You know what we're doing? We're going to give you another balanced budget." But all independent auditors are telling it quite clearly and they're being honest about it. What they're saying is, "Where's the \$2-billion shortfall coming from and what assets are you going to sell?" It didn't get said in the throne speech. It didn't get said anywhere else.

One of the other things that they like to tell us about is those wonderful tax cuts that they always proclaim are the be-all and end-all of the universe of Ontario. They said that they've made 225 tax cuts since 1995. What they failed to tell to you is that they've downloaded on to municipalities and other areas that provide those services. They've attached 553 user fees to those 225 tax cuts. Tell me, does that pocket feel nice and thick with all that money from those tax cuts they're talking about? Heck, no; it's gone in to pay for the 553 user fees that have been applied since they came into office. So I wouldn't be taking fiscal gratitude from this government at all. They've added \$21 billion to the debt and they've added 553 user fees.

On public safety and security, I want to say that the other documents that I have in my hand are the really good ones. We've got Excellence for All in our education, a platform that's being endorsed by educators and parents across the province, and Growing Strong Communities. One year ago we announced that we wanted to make sure that there are 1,000 new police officers, but added to that we're going to have 100 new probation and parole officers to make our communities safe and secure.

An Ontario economic growth pattern—we're also dealing with the health care needs. We've got another platform that's out there: government and democratic reform. That's long overdue and has been praised by everybody. Anybody who knows anything about democracy is saying that this platform is a marvellous one in terms of democratic reform. The other issue that we've got in is another platform on our agricultural community that my colleague Steve Peters has been working on immensely to build up. I know my other colleague John Cleary, who's been in this place for a long time, who knows the agricultural community, deserves, my friends, an awful lot of credit for his understanding of rural Ontario. When he talks, you better listen because he knows what he's talking about. He endorses our plan.

I want to tell you very clearly that there was very little mention of the problems that have arisen in my riding. There's no mention whatsoever from our health department on the transportation costs of our dialysis patients. Not a penny is coming from them. There is no help for our brownfield redevelopment on the financial side. The regulations that they just snuck out are not acceptable to our municipalities. We knew that would happen and I

said that in committee. The government has failed to remove that ill-advised 15% increase of copayments on our senior citizens in long-term care. That's an insult to those people who built this province. Don't take credit for being proud of your senior citizens when you charge them that much money. The doctor shortage, the MRC problem—the Medical Review Committee have got my community up in arms.

Laurier Brantford is the only university in this province that has not received one dime of capital funding from this government. We need that money to help us grow a university in our riding.

Mr Steve Peters (Elgin-Middlesex-London): Ladies and gentlemen across Ontario, it's time for a change. I truly wish that this government would call the election. You know, there's a real myth out there that this government is so in control when it comes to fiscal management.

Let's look at the record. In 1990, when the Liberals left office, the debt of this province stood at \$39 billion. In 1995, when this government took over, the debt stood at \$90.7 billion. You know what the debt is today? It's \$111 billion. This government has added over \$21 billion to the debt. They're mortgaging your children's future and your grandchildren's future. These debts don't even include the debts that aren't shown in the provincial accounting, the debts that hospitals have had to assume because of chronic underfunding by this government. Let's look at some other wasteful spending by this government.

You've seen all this propaganda coming in the mail lately. You've seen the phony budget brochure. You've seen the West Nile brochure. Do you know how much they spent on that? Two hundred and fifty million a year. Your tax dollars, ladies and gentlemen across Ontario, are being wasted by this government—\$250 million a year, \$111 billion in debt, \$21 billion in new debt courtesy of Mike Harris and Ernie Eves.

Let's talk about consultants: \$662 million spent by this government, wasted on consultants, pointed out by the Provincial Auditor. So between \$662 million and \$250 million, we've got our own boondoggle in Ontario. We've got our own billion-dollar boondoggle, and the Harris-Eves government is responsible for that, for wasting your hard-earned dollars, ladies and gentlemen. These aren't fiscal managers; these are people who are prepared to mortgage the future, your future, for their own interests. I think that's totally irresponsible for a government to do.

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They say in this throne speech that they're going to help reform support for children with special needs. Let's talk about a young lady in London named Marlo Leatham. The Minister of Health promised almost a year ago that he was going to help Marlo Leatham out. "Oh, don't worry. It's just bureaucratic bungling and things are going to get solved." I had the opportunity this past weekend to attend a fundraiser on behalf of this young lady, and they're still waiting. This government has let down Marlo Leatham. The sad thing, when I was at the

fundraiser for Marlo, is that there are so many other Marlo Leathams out there. This government has turned its back on those individuals.

It's interesting, too, that all of a sudden they've discovered rural Ontario. They're going to develop a rural platform. Finally, after eight years this government has discovered that there is more to this province than the city of Toronto, that there is rural Ontario and there are distinct differences that exist between urban and rural. Finally, after eight years, this government realizes that it's turned its back on rural Ontario and that it needs to do something to help rural Ontario out.

They talk about mental health. We're still waiting in southwestern Ontario. In 1998, the Health Services Restructuring Commission issued its final report for the London and St Thomas psychiatric hospitals. We are still waiting. There are individuals in crisis out there. This government has not made a commitment to mental health in any way, shape or form.

They talk about transparency in unions, democracy and accountability. How about some democracy in the province of Ontario? We sat just a little over 70 days last year. We haven't sat in this Legislature for over 130 days. This government is afraid to face the opposition in question period. You're wasting taxpayers' dollars by operating this facility and not having us here doing what we should be doing. Your irresponsible measure of introducing a budget outside the Legislature is totally undercutting the whole democratic tradition in this province. You should recognize that's a serious mistake.

You talk about beautifying the roads in this province. You're going to do more to cut grass. Why don't we plant wildflowers and get the roads looking better that way?

You talk about the 10,000 Ontarians who participated in this process; 0.1% participated in this process.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Hon Mrs Johns: At last.

Mr Christopherson: If you guys wouldn't heckle so loud. Given how many Liberals were speaking, I'll just mention that the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London talked about the budget a bit, and that gives me an opportunity to come back to this whole issue about balanced budgets. I don't think the point was quite taken on the either side of the aisle just yet that the Dominion Bond Rating Service has not only said this is not a balanced budget—remember, this is not partisan. This is one of the international bond rating agencies looked at by virtually every key investor.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Go there, David.

Mr Christopherson: I've got no problem going there. I'm not the one standing up bragging about five balanced budgets, I say to my friend from Durham. You are. Now the people who know the difference, who have no political axe to grind, are saying not only are you not balancing this year's budget, they're saying you didn't balance last year's budget. There was almost \$600 million—

Interjections.

Mr Christopherson: Listen to them heckle, Speaker. It tells you that obviously I'm touching a nerve. It upsets them to no end that somebody would dare suggest that their ability to manage the money may not be as perfect as they say, and yet there it is. It's interesting as to why the bond rating agencies are pointing this out. It's the same thing we said during last year's budget, which at least you had the decency to read here, and the so-called budget that was read elsewhere this time. Both times you show revenue of over \$2 billion to come from sales of assets unknown. Originally, it was going to be Hydro One. We want to know what it's going to be this year, because you didn't sell Hydro One last year. This is your second year with a budget that is not balanced.

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I'm very pleased to respond to the comments of the member for Brant and the member for Elgin-Middlesex-London, who maybe weren't quite as frank as they could be in their presentation of numbers, or perhaps they were just a little unclear in the presentation of their numbers, because they were talking about \$22 billion.

Interjections.

Mr Miller: Well, one said \$21 billion and the other said \$22 billion—they were \$1 billion off—being added to the debt; that's probably true. But of course the government started in 1995, inheriting from the third party a \$12-billion debt, and then we worked actively to reduce that year after year, so that now in the last five years we've had a balanced budget and in fact have paid off \$5 billion of the debt. This is validated by the Provincial Auditor.

I wanted to have a moment to comment on the member from Nipissing, who was speaking earlier about some of the initiatives in the throne speech to do with northern Ontario. I think it's worth highlighting the new program coming out to do with nurses, free tuition for nurses who will practise in underserved areas in the north. This is going to be a real benefit for northern Ontario.

The member from Nipissing was speaking strongly about the various initiatives for northern Ontario, including the new teaching hospital that's going to be located in Sudbury and Thunder Bay, and also the \$1 billion for cancer research that was highlighted in the throne speech. Having just attended the funeral of my friend Gord Lomas last week, who died of cancer, I think this is a very good investment to be making toward trying to beat this disease which affects so many of us.

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): I'm pleased to join the debate on the throne speech, along with my colleagues from Elgin-Middlesex-London, Brant, Ottawa Centre and Hamilton West.

I'd just like to correct one thing that was said across the way about free tuition for rural medical students and nurses. It's actually not free; the medical students were here, and it's actually a fraction of the cost of their tuition. Initially it sounded like a great idea, it was a wonderful idea and we supported it, but if you look at the facts, it's not free. Check your facts with the medical students and you will see that many of them say it's

really not worth going into that kind of debt because it is not free tuition. I don't know what you have in mind for the nurses, but if it follows the same funding formula that you have for the medical students, then that isn't—

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): Not one person admitted to a northern medical school turned it down.

Mrs Bountrogianni: Actually, that's not true; another untruth across the way. A lot of students have turned down the tuition because it is a flawed formula. You probably were not here the day—you probably had something important to do—the medical students came and explained that to you at the press conference. That's OK.

I think this is a good opportunity to bring up another point, that at the 11th hour, after over two years now of increased anxiety across the province of a double cohort, last week the government said they would fund the double cohort for universities—not colleges; universities. They said the criteria for entrance to universities would not change. There are two large universities to date that have said that's not true. One is McMaster. They've already increased by 5% their entrance for arts and science, and Queen's says that out of the 40,000 applicants this year for 2,750 first-year undergraduate spots, they're only going to accept 200 because they are so underfunded. So let's be a little more truthful.

2010

Mr O'Toole: It's my pleasure to respond in two minutes. I caution viewers tonight that in the next few minutes I'll try to survey the landscape for them from our perspective.

I was quite surprised with the Liberals' comments. Most of them were not fully informed on the issues they spoke about. I'm most impressed with their lack of ability to address the real issue of the accumulated debt. Many of them weren't here in 1995, when their red book committed at the time not to reduce taxes. They committed to that. That's the Liberal plan. They committed over a number of years, in their document at the time, to eventually balance the books, which was the \$11-billion annual deficit. If you had done the numbers—

Interjection.

Mr O'Toole: It's important that you pay attention here. If each year it was \$10 billion and it was four years, they would have added \$40 billion to the accumulated debt.

The point is what we have done, and it's hard for them to understand. There were three years between 1995 and around 1997 that we had to slow down the spending. You were spending 20% more each year in excess of revenue, so over two years we did increase the amount of debt by about \$16 billion. But it's clear, if you pay attention, that we balanced the budget actually two years, or a year and a half, ahead of time and as such we've now accumulated five annual balanced budgets.

I would say to the other side that I'm anxious to read—I have read many of their election propaganda booklets; most of them are wrong. There are 27 pages, and not one number in them. I challenge each of you,

because on the campaign trail you're in serious trouble because the people don't trust you. They don't trust the Liberals.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Patten: I appreciate the comments from the members for Hamilton West, Parry Sound-Muskoka, Hamilton Mountain and Durham. I look forward to his comments.

It seems many people are talking about the economic side of things. My colleague from Brant just reminded me that this government spent more in the past year, according to the Provincial Auditor, than any other government in the history of this jurisdiction called Ontario—\$75,000 an hour, 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the whole year—close to \$700 million on consultants alone. They talk about downsizing but they obviously haven't learned how to manage consultants. They don't know how to hire consultants, they don't know how to see consultants deal with the task at hand—runaway costs, absolutely incredible—and these are the people who propagate the image of being good financial managers. The people of Ontario these days are beginning to see through that imagery, that it just ain't true.

While the member from Durham talks about things, remember that you borrowed the money and gave taxes away. You reduced taxes and borrowed money to pay for a balanced budget. It's costing you money. You added to the mortgage, you added to the accumulated debt, and that's why we have a bigger accumulated debt today. If that makes sense, it's like saying to somebody, "You'll only have to pay me \$100 for your mortgage, but do you know what? I'll just add the difference to your mortgage and you'll pay it later on." It's the same sort of thing, which is exactly what has happened with our hydro costs that we see are going to affect the province in that fashion.

I see my time is up, except to say that this is obviously a throne speech designed for an election. We are ready any particular time and we'll be happy to hit the trail.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr O'Toole: It's my pleasure to rise this evening and respond to the speech from the throne. I should caution that I will be sharing my time with the member from Perth-Middlesex, who is anxious to speak on this issue as well, as are all members on this side of the House who know that it's difficult but necessary decisions that go along with the challenge of leadership in the province.

It's hard for me in a very humble way to frame the discussion here tonight in such a way that people have some confidence that what is being said is in fact what will be done or has been done, because what you've been hearing over the last 20 minutes or so is mostly fabricated speculation. Many of you realize that you ultimately have to be able to identify the speakers and their party.

I always like to refer to the federal government because it's not as direct a criticism. They promised to eliminate the GST and they promised to do all these things—solve the airport issue and all that stuff—and

that's basically the brand for the Liberals. The brand for the Liberals has always been stated and it has always been true. When David Peterson called the election at the end of their little term, he promised the people of Ontario that the budget was balanced. In fact, as Mr Christopher could tell you, the NDP ended up inheriting almost—I think it was about a \$4-billion shortfall in what they called a balanced budget. That's your record. That's what you're going to have to defend in the next election.

The people of Ontario spoke in 1995. They spoke in 1990, actually, when they took you out. They spoke again in 1995. They spoke again in 1999. They don't trust you.

Interjection.

Mr O'Toole: No, that's your brand. You're going to have to work with what is.

Interjections.

Mr O'Toole: Honest to God, if you aren't paying attention—I'm trying to give you kind, legitimate advice.

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): Constructive criticism.

Mr O'Toole: Instructive advice and criticism.

So the record's very clear. It's very clear that in the last five years, there have been five balanced budgets. All of the naysayers voted against all of the tax policies of this government. In their discussions, they voted against every measure that made Ontario the strength of this country. That's a fact. They voted against every single measure to improve the tax competitiveness of every municipality, every small business, every retired citizen, every student working. Every single tax measure you voted against. In fact, I know what you stand for. You want to increase taxes, increase the bureaucracy and increase spending; we all know that. The people of Ontario know your message: that you're going to kowtow to the teachers' unions and to all the union groups. In fact, I believe we should find a way of making sure that the value for money, the services that the people of Ontario—is how this should be addressed.

But I must get back. I digress; I admit I was drawn into it a bit. But now I'm going back to the throne speech. I reviewed the comments made by Lieutenant Governor Bartleman. I read through them, and his respectful comments with respect to the health care workers are worth repeating. All of those, both the families and the individuals—our hearts go out to that issue of the tragedy that confronted those. I want to be on the record as commending the health care workers, doctors, nurses and other professionals for their outstanding courage at putting themselves at risk for the people of Ontario.

I'm absolutely disappointed, I'm shocked and disappointed, by the Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty challenging the very substance of the SARS debate. Calling for an inquiry earlier today really is a confrontational approach with the health care workers of this province—not trusting those health care workers. So that's the record we're dealing with.

I have to say that I do reflect on the throne speech, that speech which started out like this—many of you should

listen and pay a little closer attention: “It is the promise of Ontario that inspires our citizens—young and old—to hope, dream and achieve.”

It’s creating that environment, that environment where people have opportunity and hope—it’s that very hope and opportunity that was diminished and denied under the NDP; a regressive regime, many would call it. But the people spoke on that, and they spoke on it in 1990 as well. All of the Liberal plans at the time were nothing more than false promises, in fact.

I look at the achievements that the people of Ontario have allowed us to pursue so far. I think one of the more controversial ones, Mr Speaker—and you would know this, I’m sure—is the issue of the education municipal tax portion for senior citizens. The other side, I understand—and they can refute this—are on record as saying they are not going to give the senior citizens of this province a single tax break.

Mr Gerretsen: No. You’re wrong.

Mr O’Toole: That is the record, and I want to repeat that. It’s absolutely discouraging. I talked to my very ill mother-in-law about how they’re actually going to be taking money. Do you realize that there are 800,000 people living in Ontario who don’t pay any tax at all? But many of them still pay federal Liberal tax. We have taken them off the tax rolls completely. If you had it your way, I understand every one of them—your brand is this, and I’m going to repeat it throughout my remarks this evening: you want to tax everyone to death, including the seniors.

2020

Don’t try to ignore it or avoid it. You are for giving the taxes to the civil servants to squander. I believe that the proper tax policy is to have people feel that they should pay their share. Senior citizens in my riding are the most generous volunteers, to a drop. They give in other ways, and have given all of their lives, to make this country and this province the great place that we all share today.

Just one tax concession, I ask—I almost plead with you to allow the seniors to have this one small bit of recognition. It’s about \$400 per senior citizen residence, for a hard-working 70-plus-year-old that you wouldn’t give a single tax break to. I find that unconscionable. It almost brings tears to my eyes to think of how the ideology of the Liberals is such that there is not one tax cut, not even for retired, hard-working senior citizens, veterans and those people who have given their very lives for this great province.

But I think I’ll have a look at the proper investments in the last couple of minutes that I have before my good friend from Perth-Middlesex gets up.

I must respectfully mention my riding, because Durham is kind of an ideal place to live, work and raise your family. It really is. It involves north Oshawa and Port Perry, Lake Scugog. Some of the communities are so terrific. The quality of life there is just breathtaking. The Oak Ridges moraine goes through it. I’m going to a meeting tomorrow night in what’s referred to as the test

hill area. There are great steps that we’ve taken there. Orono is a nice community. Burkton, Blackstock, Tyrone. The names just come to me like poetry, really. Solina, for instance, is another community.

But what does this mean in pure economic terms to my constituents? I think of Clarington, where 30% of the people, according to the Statistics Canada report that I reviewed for the notes tonight, are on average earning \$7,000 more per year since 1996. The unemployment rate in Scugog—that’s Port Perry, a beautiful community there—has dropped by 25%, and the average earner is now making \$5,427 more than they did in 1996. That means a family can make choices with the children, whether it’s signing them up for hockey, buying them a set of rollerblades, getting them music lessons, giving them the quality of life that parents want to make choices about.

I meet those families at daycare centres and the Y. I was at the library just last week. They’re an involved community. I look at Oshawa as a larger place. The unemployment rate has dropped an astounding, almost breathtaking 34%. In that community, the average worker made \$6,000 more in 2001 than they did in 1996. The tax cuts—the job is certainly not done there.

Now we’re going to address tax policy specifically focused and geared to seniors and young working families. I’m excited to think of the election coming ahead, probably some time in the next year. I think of young people graduating from university. I remember in our leadership campaign, the Honourable Tony Clement, the health minister—a person who deserves all our recognition this evening for the work he’s done on SARS—has got some remarkable ideas. In fact, when I look at the bench strength of this government, it must make you worry on the other side.

Interjections.

Mr O’Toole: No, seriously. When I think of Helen Johns, what she’s done in agriculture; David Young—when he was Attorney General he was remarkable; now he’s with Municipal Affairs. Tim Hudak in consumer and business services—I met with a group of people today that came to me and said, “You know, that Tim Hudak is with it. He understands.” Jim Flaherty is probably the best voice for this province next to our Premier, Ernie Eves. Elizabeth Witmer, the Deputy Premier, has got more character and class than the other side.

It’s a privilege for me to serve on this team and to work doggedly and persistently for the right issues, but I take the issues of seniors right close to heart because I’m in my 60th year. It’s the energy I get from my colleagues on this side, the perseverance and commitment. I know we’re on the right track. The future looks bright. The people of Ontario know it. We’ve got the right leader, we’ve got the bench strength and we’ve got the commitment from the people of Ontario to continue the job and not to turn back to the Liberal ways of tax and spend.

You’ve got a government you can trust. We’re on the right track, Mr Speaker. I know you think probably this is the right way to go yourself. I wouldn’t want to put words in your mouth.

At the end of the day—I don't think there's a vote on this tonight—in my view, we're on the right track.

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): On behalf of the constituents of Perth-Middlesex, I'd like to add my comments on the throne speech tonight. I don't have all night to do it. My time is limited, but I want to take this opportunity to comment on keeping the economy strong to support health care and education; I want to comment on better health care for you and your family; I want to comment on education for the future. I want to comment on making government work even better. I want to comment on your communities, safe and strong. I want to comment on Ontario, growing beautifully, and on protecting the vulnerable.

I also have some other things I want to discuss tonight. I want to say a little bit about the SARS recovery. I'm very pleased with the strategy that was set out and followed by Premier Eves. Within an hour, a few minutes of being called and made aware by the medical officer of health of the details, he was in action. Some of you say, "Oh, I thought he was the same as the mayor and the Prime Minister." No. What you failed to understand was that our Premier now has a little different style than some. All you saw on television was the Honourable Tony Clement, Minister of Health. I want you to know, and I'm telling you right now, that our Premier delegates responsibility to good people and good ministers. I want to tell you that was deliberate and was well thought out.

I'm happy the three parties could co-operate and pass the SARS Assistance and Recovery Strategy Act as quickly as possible so that the recovery could begin—the kind of co-operation that is rare in this House.

At this point, I would also like to give a pat on the back and a great big thank you—and that's not enough—and to demonstrate and articulate all the thanks and gratitude of my family and my community for the health workers of Ontario, who have contributed so much during this SARS crisis, the doctors and nurses and those on the front lines, the ambulance workers, the police who had to do their duties, and so on, going in to work each day in a recovery unit where you know you're treating somebody with that kind of disease. It's almost unimaginable how a health worker would feel doing that each day. I want to thank them.

One of the particular reasons I want to do that is that we had a patient in the small town I live in, Listowel, Ontario, who was separated as—I forget the two terms—a potential SARS patient. She came within the guidelines for that. For 10 days I believe our hospital not only did all the work we expect it to do 365 days a year, but went far and beyond. Thank goodness the results were not as they thought they might be, but they knew all of the precautions that they took; they were practising their trade in the most admirable manner.

2030

Our medical officer of health for the county of Perth, that I live in and represent, Dr Susan Tamblyn, has been down here in Toronto—

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): Who?

Mr Johnson: I'll tell you who. She's a well-known doctor, an officer in our county, well experienced; she's a specialist in epidemics and pandemics and she's tried to educate all the province and her colleagues on that. She's been down here in Toronto. I talked to her and she said, "Bert, I'm lucky. One of the reasons I can be down there, putting this time into the team that is fighting SARS in Toronto, is because I have a resident who happened to consent to stay for a period of time to allow me to be down here." I asked her, "Are there things you need?" She said, "What we really need is communications. There is so much information." I can imagine this: they'll put out, "Wear a scarf," and an hour later they'll say, "Don't wear a scarf; wear a kerchief." Next time it will be, "Wear two of them." This information has to go out to every health care worker in Ontario, not just to the hospitals that are treating active patients. She said, "We need communications." I can understand that and I'll help her out in every way I can with that.

I said, "Should we be getting other health care workers from other provinces to come and help in this?" She said yes. I said, "Do you have workers who are burned out?" She said, "Our group hasn't. The front-line health care workers, the nurses and doctors, yes, but our team that's working behind the scene hasn't. But the reason they should be brought in is so that we can lend our experience and our expertise, the things we've learned, the things we're doing. We should be able to help to educate those people in other provinces that need and want that information and can benefit from it."

Tonight I would like to say to Dr Susan Tamblyn and all the people who work behind the scenes, to all those who delegated the responsibility to the people that they should have and did, like our Premier, to all the health care workers who were involved in the day-to-day, not only there but in Toronto, a great big thank you.

The SARS fallout is not restricted to the Toronto area. I have a farmer in my riding who raises ducks and geese. A good part of his business—and I don't know of how many hundreds of thousands, it's not small, and he's a good farmer—a lot of his trade is selling ducks and geese to Chinese restaurants. As everyone knows, that has taken a tremendous hit. So has his business. I said, "You'll get over that. That will come back." He said, "Yes, but all those other competitors for my trade, not only in ducks and geese but chickens and all those other commodities, are going to want to get their business too, so it won't be easy."

Mr Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity to add some of my comments to the fantastic throne speech that was done by our Premier.

Mr Gerretsen: I too want to take a few moments to respond to the last two members as it relates to the SARS situation that has occurred here in Toronto and in Ontario, and first of all compliment and congratulate the health care workers who have been involved in this very tough situation, who have worked and gone beyond what society could possibly expect from them in dealing with the situation the best way they know how. Many of these

people I'm sure are bone-tired, and we all hope that the SARS situation will resolve itself fairly quickly.

That is not what the motion this afternoon, to call for a public inquiry, was all about. Some very legitimate questions are still out there. One of the questions I have is, why did this happen here in Toronto, where we had many people come on a daily basis to our international airport? It didn't happen in British Columbia, where they've got just as many people coming into our country from Asia. None of this happened in British Columbia. Are there different ways in which they handle infectious diseases in British Columbia?

I'm just talking as a layperson. I'm not attacking any of the health care workers in the Toronto area by doing that, but there are some questions out there. If we somehow think this is a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence, then we'd better think again. We have to be prepared for whatever comes next, and the best way to get to the bottom of all these issues is to hold a completely independent inquiry. That's what the motion was all about this afternoon.

Mr Marchese: There are a lot of members who in my view are wasting a whole lot of time talking about SARS. They're patting themselves on the back for the work they have done. Don't do that, because other than the health care professionals, your government has nothing to be proud of on this issue.

In British Columbia, the government was well aware of what was coming. They sent the alert to hospitals that this is an issue they should be dealing with, and they did. This was in mid-February. My assumption is that you people knew that too and that your leader knew it and that the Minister of Health knew that as well. I have no problem congratulating the heroes, ie, the health care professionals, who have shown incredible leadership on this issue. But please, for your sakes, try not to take any credit for anything you have done, because you've done nothing.

The only response you made was at the end, literally, of the solution for SARS, which was April 24, and nothing before that. You were in complete denial before that. Your Premier and your Minister of Health were nowhere to be seen, except when the minister went to Geneva with his bag, saying, "I'm going to defeat this thing; I'm going to lick this thing to the ground." That's the only time he did anything. Prior to that, he was nowhere to be seen. Please don't embarrass yourselves any more than you have to.

Our health care providers did a great job of protecting us as best they could. I have nothing but praise for them. But for you, please, the quieter you are, the better.

Hon Tim Hudak (Minister of Consumer and Business Services): It's a pleasure to rise and contribute tonight to the debate on the throne speech. I always enjoy the comments of my good friend and colleague from Durham. I hear so much about the Scugog-Port Perry place and how beautiful it is—poetic in fact—absolutely bucolic, so I'll have to take a chance and visit there.

I have had the chance to visit the riding of my friend from Perth-Middlesex on a number of occasions. He had

me there in a previous capacity in Milverton for a new arena, which he championed. That new arena is now up and open in Milverton. In St Marys it's the St Marys library, I remember.

I spent some time in Listowel as well, with my wife coming from Listowel. I've got to tell you that Bert Johnson is very popular in the Listowel area. They remember very well when he brought the Premier to Listowel to talk about the future of that hospital, which remains open and strong and growing today.

The one area I really enjoyed, in addition to the descriptions of the ridings, was the member's comments particularly about tax cuts. One issue that's getting a lot of resonance in the area of Lincoln, particularly among seniors, is the rebate for seniors. I think of that senior couple in Port Colborne or Dunnville at the end of the month, lined up, trying to figure out how to pay their bills on a fixed income. The notion of rebating the property tax they've been paying into the system for decades, for generations, giving them back some money at the end of the year to help: I don't see any problem with that. It's a great idea. Helping seniors with some tax relief is an outstanding policy idea and I strongly support it, as do the seniors back in Erie-Lincoln, seniors who helped to build this country, helped to build this province. What's wrong with a bit of a reward at the end of the day by eliminating that tax for seniors? I know the members across the floor are against it. They don't like tax cuts. They revile tax cuts; they're firmly against tax cuts.

If there's only one thing McGuinty ever said that he has stuck to, it's that he's against tax cuts. But I thought I heard the member for Kingston and the Islands mention tonight, "Just you wait. There's something coming for seniors in the tax cut department." Are we going to see another Dalton McGuinty flip-flop when it comes to the seniors' tax credit?

2040

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Thunder Bay-Atikokan): I want to address a number of issues that I don't think the honourable members addressed in their comments on the throne speech, but which stood out for me. I'm a little bit surprised the honourable members haven't mentioned them.

I know they like to talk about their support for tax cuts. They also like to put it in the context of their supposed support for balanced budgets. I would have thought they would have wanted to talk about the concern of Dominion Bond Rating Service, which came out today and said, "This government does not have a balanced budget. This government has a \$1.9-billion deficit in this current budget." That is exactly what the Toronto-Dominion Bank said when it saw that \$2-billion worth of assets were to be sold and the minister could not identify what those assets were if the budget was ever to be balanced.

Some of us actually believe that you should have true balanced budgets, that if you're going to make the commitments in health and education, you simply can't afford to have the tax cuts if you want to keep a real

balanced budget, not the illusion of one, which Dominion Bond Rating Service certainly blew apart this afternoon.

I'm surprised the members opposite didn't want to talk about the public health aspects of the throne speech where the government wants to talk about its commitment to public health. I wish we had heard that commitment somewhere, anywhere, over the past two years. Time and time again we've raised the cutbacks in public health programs, this government's willingness to see mandatory public health programs go unfunded because they downloaded the responsibility for public health to municipalities without any concern about whether municipalities could afford the programs.

The minister wants to talk about public health spending increases when we know that those were purely and solely for exceptional circumstances, like West Nile virus. I'm surprised the government didn't want to talk about how much it cut from public health when it fired the five scientists. One of those scientists had a responsibility for looking at resistance to superbugs. What could have been more valuable this week?

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr O'Toole: It's clear we generated some interest in the remarks earlier on the throne speech. I appreciate the comments from the member for Perth-Middlesex. He was right on topic. The member for Kingston and the Islands: he seems to be getting most of it. The member for Trinity-Spadina: I always like his sparkling remarks, mostly inaccurate, but I enjoy them.

The member for Thunder Bay-Atikokan, I think, is a good place to start and end. She was here when David Peterson beguiled the people of Ontario with the closing budget and the quickly and hastily called election. They saw the economy going into the tank after three years and they kind of fudged the books, so to speak. A balanced budget: it's still being talked about as the greatest shell game on record. She really didn't get it. It's clear from her policies when she was leader—she got bounced off the radar screen, a nice person and all that—that she didn't get it then, and she doesn't get it now, that there is a relationship between revenue and tax policy. It's a shame, really that the two—it's the tax policies that have allowed us to make the inordinate investments in health care.

I'm only going to dwell on one policy area. They committed to not changing health care spending. We committed to increasing health care spending. In fact, we've exceeded \$10 billion. It's almost a 50% increase in health care alone since 1995—\$10 billion; 17.4 or 17.3, some would argue about that point, but it's now in excess of \$28 billion.

If I look at my riding of Durham—it's important to always bring things back to the people I'm accountable to on those things I have some responsibility for—for instance, Lakeridge Health Corp's budget has gone from \$140 million in 1995 to over \$200 million. That's a 43% increase. Durham Regional Cancer Centre is being located there, bringing services closer to people, and there are 1,200 new long-term-care beds.

The job's not done. We need another—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Further debate?

Mr Gerretsen: I'm very pleased to speak in this debate, the first opportunity I've had since about December 15 of last year. I will be sharing my time with the member from Davenport.

Let me first of all say that I congratulate the government. Yes, I congratulate the government, for at least having the decency to have the throne speech presented in this chamber. I'll tell you, after the budget was presented in the automotive plant I had visions that from now on we would be hearing throne speeches—I don't know—at the Air Canada Centre, in the SkyDome, in some school gymnasium or what have you. All of the discussion that took place about that ill-fated infomercial of the budget probably couldn't have been said any better than it was by Mr Sean Conway of Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. I cannot remember an issue over the last eight years on which literally every daily newspaper in the province of Ontario editorialized about their ill-fated attempt to basically do away with our democratic traditions of having the budget presented here in the House. So at least we're here—maybe for three or four days—listening to the throne speech.

Let me deal with the senior citizen tax issue. Let there be no mistake about it. Every one of us in here is in favour of tax cuts. We would all like to pay as little tax as possible. Who wouldn't like to pay less in taxes? The problem is that we cannot afford it. You cannot on the one hand say, "Hey, taxpayers, we no longer need your money," and on the other hand say, "We're going to invest more in hospitals, universities, schools etc." It doesn't make any sense. It didn't make any sense before, and it doesn't make any sense now.

Let's deal with the education tax credit. The first thing we have to remember is that two years ago the government said the education portion of our property taxes was going to be reduced by 20% universally. They implemented the first 10%. What did they do with the next 10%? Well, last year they delayed it for a year, and this year they basically got away with it. So that's a promise they didn't keep. They were going to reduce everybody's education portion of their property tax bill by 10%, and they're not going to do it.

What they've said instead is, "We're going to do it for senior citizens, for people over 65." That's going to cost the treasury of the province something like \$500 million. I wish we could do it, but we can't do it, because with the system they've set up, as has already been heard before, if you've got a house that is assessed much higher than another house, you're going to get a much greater portion of the money. On average, I guess, it's going to be something like \$425 per housing unit, but some people—if you live in a \$5-million home, we've already heard tonight, you're going to get \$20,000 back. In a \$250,000 home, you will get about \$670 back. So let there be no mistake about it; the higher value your property has, the more money you are going to get back. It's going to cost us \$500 million. So I say, is that the best way to spend \$500 on behalf of the seniors in this province?

We've got a better way to do it. It's contained in our platform. It has been costed out as well. I had the privilege over the last eight or nine months to be the critic for long-term care. We did quite an extensive study as to what it would cost to first of all bring the nursing homes and the long-term-care homes in this province up to the point whereby at least there is an average of nursing and personal care that is on average with the 10 jurisdictions that the government itself studied in the Pricewaterhouse report. The cost of that is \$250 million. That would provide for adequate nursing and personal care in the nursing homes that simply isn't available for everybody.

Now, am I attacking the individuals who work in these nursing homes? Of course not. The problem simply is this: with people becoming frailer and needing more and more help in nursing homes, you need more people to look after their needs properly. That's going to cost \$250 million. What's it going to cost to get the community care access centres enough money so that they can provide community care for those individuals who either come out of hospitals and need some post-acute care in their own homes or people who are suffering from chronic care problems? According to the association, it's going to cost an immediate \$294 million in order to bring the home care system to the point whereby those people who need it in this province are actually getting it.

2050

So the long and the short of it is this: I say that rather than spending that \$500 million on all the seniors in the province, in a very disproportionate way, why don't we spend that money for those people who live in our nursing homes, who live in our long-term-care homes, who need home care at home? Many of these people have been cut off over the last four to five years.

I say it's the government's responsibility to look after those individuals who, through whatever circumstance, particularly if they're elderly and frail, cannot look after themselves. That, to my way of thinking, is a much more responsible way to get that \$500 million in benefits to our senior citizen population, because most of the people who require home care and who live in our nursing homes and long-term-care homes are senior citizens. I would strongly suggest that that's done.

Then we've gone one step further, as has already been mentioned earlier today. I will just read you two very simple paragraphs that are contained in our platform dealing with home care. It states as follows:

"Romanow identified home care as an essential component of modern medicare. Our long-term vision"—vision, something you people haven't had, if you ever had it, in a long time—"is to make home care a medically necessary service." Let me tell you, I am personally totally convinced of that: that if we want to make sure that people do not need to stay in hospitals as long as they do, or if we want to make sure they can stay in their own home as long as possible before they go to a nursing home or a home for the aged, we'd better make sure that they have the necessary home care there to do it. If we're

not doing that, all we're doing is pushing people quicker and quicker into these long-term-care facilities.

What we go on to say is, "Our first step is to get our vulnerable and elderly the services they need. We will remove the arbitrary Harris-Eves limits on home care." We've all heard the stories from people, where you can't get more than 60 hours a month and you say—and I questioned the minister about this during estimates—"Well, what if somebody needs 70 or 80 hours per month and they don't have the means to pay for the extra 10 or 20 hours? What happens in that case?" Well, we all know what happens in that case. That person gets put in an institution at a much higher cost than it would be to pay for the extra 10 or 20 hours per month.

So we say, "Look, if it's going to cost a person, let's say, \$3,000 per month in a long-term-care facility and as a society we're only willing to give \$1,700 to \$1,800 per month for their home care—at most—why don't we increase that to at least the level it would cost to keep that person in a long-term-care facility?" They would have the benefit of still staying in their home environment, which is what they would prefer. Every survey, every study has indicated that: if you give a person a choice, they will stay in their own home as long as the services are there. That's our commitment in that regard.

There are many other things to say. In the last minute and a half that I have left, I just want to talk about my bill; it's now Bill 6. Let me just very quickly read the name of this bill, because it has been talked about many, many times. The Minister of Finance, or the Premier when he was the Minister of Finance, in 1996 said he was going to implement this. It was contained in the 1999 throne speech. It's again contained in this throne speech. That is the bill that I have introduced on two separate occasions here, back as Bill 180 and later on Bill 5 and now Bill 6. It's exactly the same bill. It has been given first and second reading. It was unanimously approved in committee. That's the bill called An Act to amend the Audit Act to provide for greater accountability of hospitals, universities, colleges and other organizations that receive grants or other transfer payments from the government or Crown agencies.

I am absolutely committed that when we spend money as a government we should be spending it as if it came out of our own pocket. The only way we can ensure that the money truly goes toward the purposes for which it was intended through these transfer agencies is if we give the Provincial Auditor the right to follow that money that we give to these transfer agencies.

So I say to the government once again: pass this bill. It has been given second reading on two different occasions now, and yet at the same time you haven't had the guts to call the bill forward. The work has been done. Pass it and we will have some true accountability.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): I am delighted to join in the debate on the budget.

I was somewhat surprised tonight to hear some of the most partisan speeches and remarks I've ever heard, especially from the member from Durham, when he says,

"The Liberals are going to tax you to death," and of course the taxes collected are going to be squandered by bureaucrats, and on and on he went. I suppose an election is in the air. He mentioned something very interesting. He said the election won't be called until next year. My prediction is that you're going to be calling the election within the next 14 days. That's my prediction.

While we're making these speeches tonight, the Conservative backbenchers know full well that the government right now is poring over the new statistics, over the new polls, and is looking at them with a view to calling the election any time; in fact, any minute. So while we're speaking tonight, they're thinking, "Are we going to call it tomorrow? Are we going to call it the next day?" Just wait for the numbers to be right, and off they go. We've seen your capabilities tonight. That's why we've had these partisan comments. I think it's really beneath us to have the member from Durham say that we, the Liberals, will tax you to death.

Like my honourable colleague says, of course, everyone wants to have taxes reduced. There's no doubt about that. But the real question is, can we afford it at this time? You know as well as I do that this budget is not balanced. You know as well as I do there are \$2 billion, roughly, that somehow have been skewed or somehow are trying to be hidden. We know all about that; it's in the papers. Anybody can be informed about that. But to tell us that we're going to be the tax-and-spend party and you're going to be the ones who are going to provide the tax credit is really ridiculous. That is not true and that is simply not a fact.

We have different priorities. Our priorities are spelled out by our leader when he says quite clearly, "Given a choice between investing in health care or borrowing for a tax cut, I will choose health care every time. I will choose health care any time over a tax cut." Is that the truth or not? Would you rather have a tax cut than see health care being reduced in terms of its services? Was it not the Conservative government that closed down emergency care for the city of Toronto? Was it not the Conservative government that wouldn't even let ambulance drivers get into the hospitals? Yes, I remember that. I remember in my own riding that the nearest hospital would not permit ambulance drivers to get those cases into those hospitals where they belonged. They had to go way out, far outside the city of Toronto. What a shame. And today you're telling me that we are tax-and-spend and you're going to be the big tax savers.

You want to be known as the people who are going to run this province efficiently, but you have to look to the Liberals and you have to steal some of the ideas from the Liberals to make you effective. If you wouldn't steal from us, you wouldn't have very much in this budget.

I'm going to ask you something: if the Conservatives were really interested in cutting down on the budget and saving good taxpayers' money, would they present these kinds of wonderful, glossy brochures, three of them, within a period of 90 days? Three glossy brochures. Would they put these out if they were really interested in

saving taxpayers' money? Mr Speaker, that is almost shameful. It's partisan. You know it and I know it, and I think the people of Ontario, looking at these brochures, will know what this is all about. This is getting you ready for an election that you're going to be calling very soon.

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Then the member for Durham said, "The poor seniors. It's the Liberals who are going to break down the barrier, and they're going to be sorry for ever voting for the Liberals. In terms of spending money, the Liberals will not spend money for seniors; it's only going to be the Conservatives."

The opposite is true. The question is this: who introduced the \$2 user fee for seniors? Was it the Liberals or was it the Conservatives? It is clear that it was the Conservatives. Who introduced the fee for long-term care? Was it the Liberals or was it the Conservatives? It was the Conservatives. Who, then, is a friend of the seniors? Is it the Liberals or is it the Conservatives?

Mr Marchese: It's got to be the Liberals.

Mr Ruprecht: No doubt about it. Even my friend from the NDP agrees it's the Liberals who are the real friends of senior citizens.

Do you know what? In the latest seniors' brief that we just received a few days ago they make it very clear where they're going to be standing.

Mr Marchese: Where are they going to stand?

Mr Ruprecht: They are looking very closely at this budget and they are not finding very much in there to be jubilant about. Many of them are going to wait for the Liberals to take over, because the Liberals will be ready. The Liberals will have a document that will be friendly to seniors. It certainly won't be the Conservatives, that's for sure.

Mr Marchese: Hey, guys, you've got to clap.

Mr Ruprecht: Thank you very much.

Mr Marchese: I'm just trying to help you out.

Mr Ruprecht: Let me tell you something else: money for the cities. In this budget, advertised all over Ontario, is there money for the cities? What about here in Toronto, where we come from? What about gridlock? Are the Conservatives going to do anything about gridlock? They haven't got the faintest idea of how to solve the problem. Have they studied it? Have they looked at it? Have they provided any incentives for the city to save money? Have they provided any incentives for the cities to get their hands on provincial coffers, on provincial money, to help the cities out with their problems? What I hear—

Mr Marchese: But the Liberals—

Mr Ruprecht: No, we don't want to be too partisan about this. The people at the doors are saying to me quite clearly, "Mr Ruprecht, fix the holes in the roads." For sure it's not really a provincial matter, but we all know that some of the money can come from the province to the cities, and the province can certainly help the city of Toronto in its budget because there is no money left. The city is forced to increase taxes for seniors simply because you have screwed up the tab. We need money for cities

in terms of cleaner streets, better garbage removal and, as I said earlier, to solve the problem of the terrible gridlock in Toronto.

What about Hydro? Have we already forgotten that the reason you needed money for a tax cut was because you wanted to sell Hydro? You wanted to privatize Hydro. They wanted to make sure that Hydro is sold so they then could take the money, those billions of dollars, and ensure that this ends up, in the budget, in general revenue so they could pay off—to some degree help some of their friends. I'm thinking especially of the sell-off of Highway 407, but that's another story for another time.

The result of all this was sky-high hydro rates. Wasn't that a fact all summer long last year? Wasn't it a fact until recently, until the Premier decided that we've got to do something about it? Why? Simply because, "We are going to lose the election. People in Ontario are not ready to pay sky-high hydro rates, so therefore let's stop it," and therefore no Hydro sale. It may be temporary. We don't know what they're going to do next time around.

Are we going to trust them? Are we ready to trust that the Conservatives will not change their minds and again try to sell Hydro or try to come up with another scheme, a scheme that may be different again, which may look at another budget plan and change the hydro laws around again? Hydro privatization is not on our agenda; it is on your agenda. Hydro privatization is not on the Liberal agenda. It's on the Conservative agenda, and you know it.

What about schools? What about the nurses? What about access to trades and professions? There's a whole list here that's not in the budget, and we would request—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Questions and comments.

Mr Marchese: It's hard not to laugh, but I want to say two things to the member for Davenport. He talks about Hydro and accuses the Tories only of wanting to sell Hydro. By extension, Tony, the member for Davenport, says, "We were always opposed to it." As the member from Niagara said, "We have lots of quotes. Marchese has lots of quotes too about where the Liberals stood on that issue." You were neck and neck, cheek by jowl with the Tories about selling Hydro One. Isn't that true, David? It is true. But you've got Tony, just prior to an election, with signs over there on Davenport saying, "We're opposed to the sale of Hydro One." It's a funny, amusing thing to see Tony going out in his community. His party takes one position, and John Gerretsen says—

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: John, hold on. I've got a few things to say. Hold on. I've only got two minutes.

You've got Tony out there with a sign saying, "We're opposed to the sale of Hydro One," and you've got his leader saying, "We're for it." Only when the public was about to beat you guys up, they said, "Oh, time to skedaddle and say we're on the side of the NDP. We're against the sell-off too." Tony, you've got to be careful. It's a bit too amusing.

I was going to talk about the tax issue, the seniors' tax benefit, but I'll have 20 minutes soon. For those of you who are still watching after all this, I'll be here in about five or six minutes to give my 20 minutes or so. But I've got to tell you, Tony, be careful in what you say, right? You get caught in things you ought not to be saying. You and your other buddies there and your other women friends, surely you are smiling about the fact that you have a different—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Further questions or comments?

Mr Johnson: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to get up and congratulate my colleagues from Kingston and the Islands and Davenport for having the fortitude to get up and say the things they did. But I did want to contradict, correct or whatever some of the information, maybe. I believe the member for Davenport said that somebody said the election is going to be next year. Somebody with the education that the member for Davenport held himself out as having should know that the member for Durham did not say that at all. He said, "The election will be sometime within the next year." If that is the same thing, then I think it's something like saying, "The Liberal Party is all for tax breaks and good government and health care and so on," and we all know it isn't. It's code for "tax, borrow and spend."

We know that because of what we hear. We heard it. I can remember that for two years after 1995 they wanted instant results. They were over there, "Uh, uh, uh, where are the jobs?" Now the jobs are here, and what are they saying? "It's because of the States." Dalton McGuinty went to the States. He went over to get his hair done and learn how to speak, and which was his good side and his bad side and so on. What he picked up over there was that he should have term governments. Yes. The 50 states over there and the federal government—one of the planks in your platform that you forgot to tell us about: four years for an election. He forgot to tell us, but that's what he learned in the States when he went over there for lessons. I wanted to add those to the comments.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell): I want to congratulate the member for Kingston and the Islands and the member for Davenport. They have delivered the message we hear at our constituency office every day. I could tell you that we are getting those messages from the people concerned, especially when we refer to the municipal education tax cut. It probably would have been different if you had said that we would impose a cap on the value of the house and also the maximum earnings that you are getting. But today having to pay back \$450 million to rich people, I would not support at any time. If I look at this gentleman we had in the paper this week with his salary of \$58 million a year, he's going to save about \$50,000 a year in municipal taxes.

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Also, we talk about improving the disability program. Look in the budget. Where do we talk about the disability program? Nowhere in the budget do we refer to that.

Those people have been on a pension of \$930 a month for the last nine years. We never considered increasing their program.

We talk about the \$750-million infrastructure program for the municipalities. I have to say that in my riding right at the present time, in Glengarry the towns of Alexandria and Glen Robertson are still waiting for their money, for the approval, to upgrade their water plant and sewage treatment plant. Where is the money? We have only spent a quarter of what we set four years ago. We haven't gone ahead. Is that because the government hasn't got the money? According to the newspaper today, in the *Toronto Sun*, we are going for around a \$2-billion deficit this year.

Mrs McLeod: I, too, want to congratulate my colleagues from Kingston and the Islands and Parkdale for their contribution to this throne speech debate. I'm really pleased the member for Kingston and the Islands began his contribution by remarking on the fact that at least the throne speech was delivered in the chamber. At least this government gave members the courtesy of hearing its throne speech in the Legislative Assembly, according to practice and precedent, if I dare to quote the government's own House leader. But I have to say that the statement in the throne speech about this government making a commitment to democratic government and an improved role for members of the Legislative Assembly absolutely takes the breath away. It is absolutely bizarre coming from the government. Imagine a government talking about a new role for members, a stronger role for individual members, when they have just kept individual members sitting outside the Legislature for some 128 days. We've sat less in this Legislature, had less debate, that with any previous government in the history of this province.

This is the government that introduced these evening sittings, not so we could have more debate, oh no, because we're not in the House long enough to have debates; it was so you wouldn't have question period. What about democratic government? How about a government that has used closure more than any other government in the history of the Parliament of Ontario? How about a government that in clear contempt of this Legislature delivered its so-called budget speech in an auto parts plant? It really took the breath away to have this government, in a muted reaction to the public outrage at the contempt this government has consistently shown for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, which reached its peak when they delivered their infomercial at Magna International—it really was a meek response to suggest this government would do anything about democracy in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Ruprecht: I want to thank the members from Trinity-Spadina, Perth-Middlesex, Glengarry-Prescott-Russell and Thunder Bay-Atikokan for their comments. First, let me address myself quickly to the member for Trinity-Spadina. I remember very clearly when the Liberals were out there with their signs saying, "We oppose

the selling of Hydro. We oppose the selling of the transmission sets. We oppose the selling of the Hydro lands. We oppose the selling of Hydro One." What happened with the NDP? Let me quickly tell you something that really happened.

There were about 100 of us standing there, trying to convince the public that the Conservatives were wrong in terms of selling Hydro, yet the NDP bus suddenly pulled up out of nowhere with their big signs. Out jumped Peter Kormos and Shelley and a few other people with their cameras, trying to film everybody who was there at our demonstration because they were so—for some reason I thought we were together on this. I thought we were together in stopping the sale and privatization of Hydro One. I thought we were together. I was really shocked to see them jump out of the bus, trying to oppose us—yes, trying to oppose us—passing out leaflets and passing out flyers and acting like a bunch of jealous teenagers. That was not a party with a plan. Those were persons who were jealous of a position where we might have gotten some publicity that they didn't want us to get.

It is clear that in terms of this budget, there are some things that are still amiss; namely, what about the money for ESL programs? Were they not supposed to be expanded? Is it not true that over 130,000 people come here from foreign countries trying to call Canada home? They need English as a second language. They need English as a primary language. They need English to function here. They need English—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Sit down. Further debate?

Mr Marchese: I'm very happy to have this opportunity to discuss the throne speech, and happy to begin by responding to the member for Davenport. I've got to say to the member for Davenport, if you come here and regularly debate the issues, you might discover that your leader and others are on the record as supporting the sell-off of Hydro One and deregulation. Only when pressure built so strongly against the government did the Liberals decide to hightail it out of that position and find themselves another cozy position, and only then did they find themselves on the same political playing field as the NDP.

But, Tony, please don't go around telling your constituents—because I don't want to say you're not telling the truth in here, but people know. They have the quotes about where your leader stands. Now, you can say Tony Ruprecht was and is against the sale of Hydro One, generation of power, whatever else you want to say, but don't say "we" and don't say "the Liberals." Don't do that, because then you have people like Marchese saying, "Tony, you just can't have it both ways."

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa West-Nepean): Sure you can.

Mr Marchese: I know they want to. I know that. I know that Tony wants it. I know Gerretsen wants it and all the other members want it. But you can't have it both

ways; you can't, not all of the time. Sometimes you can, sometimes you get away with it, but sometimes you can't, especially when you put yourself on the record. If you're going to say you weren't for it, don't put it in print, because that leaves a trail, you see? You leave a trail that both Tories and New Democrats will follow, because we're always sniffing around for these things, right? Not just us, but the general public sniffs around for these things. So anyway, Tony, you and the other members who are here in this chamber: please, let's not say much more on that.

The other issue was an unfair criticism of the Liberals by the Tories that I heard tonight, where you say that the Liberals want to tax and have the bureaucrats spend. They say they don't want to tax anyone—I know that—so you might be a tad unfair to them. I just want to put that on the record, because they say, "We will increase services, not increase taxes"—that's what they say—"and balance the budget." Only Liberals could do that. It's a remarkable alchemy that is only possible by those who have the power to make things happen like that, to increase services, which, by the way, cost money, not increase taxes—I don't know how you do that—and balance the budget. But that's what they say to you, good citizens and good taxpayers watching this program. Do you believe it's possible? I don't think it is. I don't think you can do both and balance the budget.

Here's what I think the Liberals will have to do if they get elected—God forbid, but they could. They will either reduce services to balance the budget or, God forbid, because they don't want to see it, increase taxes. Which one—

Hon Mrs Johns: Or not balance the budget.

Mr Marchese: Or not balance the budget—this is true—and deal with that issue. You're quite right. They've got three options: eliminate your bill that says you've got to have balanced budgets—you could do that; increase taxes—you could do that; reduce services, and you could do that. They could do either one of those things or many of those things—you pick—but those are the options the Liberals have. I say that with the current dollars we have, neither the Conservatives can balance a budget—dare I say it—but neither can the Liberals. Neither of the two of you can do it.

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Mrs McLeod: And you?

Mr Marchese: And we? We'll tax. Here's what we say.

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Julia, this is what we say. Hold on. What we say to the public is the following: if you want a good health care system, it costs money. You can do what the Tories are doing and privatize. Either way, it's going to come out of your pocket. You're going to pay. You can do that, or you can have a public health care system that we pay that remains in public control.

You can have a public education system that the Tories have eroded, destroyed and are now trying to put some dollars back, but if you want a strong public

education system, it costs money. If you want good social services for seniors, people with disabilities, those who suffer abuse, young people, old people, seniors, women, children, if you want to be able to provide for the services so that we have a civil society, a human society, it costs money.

You might say you want a good, strong environment and policies that protect our health and yours for future generations. We say, that costs money. If you don't want to pay for it, elect the Tories and elect the Liberals because you're going to get to the same road. With the Liberals it won't be as fast and it would be less damaging, but you get to the same conclusion really.

We, New Democrats, argue that for all the services I mentioned, if we want them, we have to pay for them. If the corporations refuse to pay their fair share, then we are on our own through income taxes, through the PST, the sales tax or user fees. There isn't much more than that. If that is the only option, where the corporate sector decides they're out of it, they're not paying their fair share, the only ones left are us. In that society, what you will get is a very Darwinian society where the wealthy will do fine by those policies, but those who are not so wealthy are on their own.

We don't think that makes for a good, healthy, civil, human society, but that's where the Tories are leading us to. The Liberal policies are not far behind. Much is made of the claim that they have a heart. They're not far behind the Tories in this regard.

So we say to people that our income tax is the fairest way to tax people to provide the services we need. If you don't like paying income taxes, then accept the fact you will have reduced services in health care, education, environment, social services, culture, natural resources, Ministry of Labour and so on, because that's the conclusion we're facing.

When you accuse the Liberals of wanting to tax, they clearly say they're not taxing, but I'm telling you, they won't be able to balance the budget and they will have to reduce services in order to get there. There's no other way of doing it. It is true that the Liberals are saying they will take back the \$700 million of the corporate taxes you have already made—not \$2.2 billion; we're not there yet. The Liberals keep on giving you, good citizens, a \$2.2-billion figure that they're taking back from the corporations. The Tories have only given out \$700 million. That's all that's been spent. The Liberals will tell you, "We're taking \$2.2 billion back." If the election were to be called next week, all they've got in their little pockets is \$700 million.

They also say they would take the tax credit given for private schools, and that's worth \$500 million. I am telling you, that's only worth \$50 million, more or less.

All the Liberals have to spend is \$750 million, plus whatever other tax measures they might want to spend—tax tobacco, presumably, and maybe a few other things. They don't have a lot of money for their \$7-billion-and-more promises. They don't. They just don't have the money. So when you say they're going to tax, I'm telling

you, just to give them some credit, they don't have the money to keep their promises.

Back to the throne speech, because it brought some amusement to my mind as I read it: it says, "Your government believes that strong leadership is about consultation, not capitulation." I don't know what that means. I know what "capitulation" means, but I don't know what "capitulation" means in relation to what and/or to whom. It was a very odd construct. But I thought, "This government is about consultation?" Since when has Harris ever been known to—

Mrs Munro: He's not here any more.

Mr Marchese: Oh, he's not here any more. Yes, I beg your pardon. Ernie Eves is here, and he's doing a whole lot of consulting. Yes.

Remind the good citizens: this government, its members, do not have a good history of consultation; they do not. They are so antidemocratic that we have never seen a government like it before. So when they tell you they want to consult and not capitulate—whatever "capitulation" means—don't believe them. Their history belies that notion that they want to consult.

Moving on with more humour: "They have called for schools that promote excellence and equality of opportunity." Their education policies—and they've got a couple of teachers who would know—have caused so much more failure in our school system than any other government prior. With their curriculum changes and the

elimination of the so-called grade 13, they have caused so much chaos in the system that students who are studying or were studying at the so-called basic level are dropping out by the thousands. And only in the last month has the Minister of Education gone to one school to say, "We are committing \$50 million for at-risk kids." It took so long for Minister Witmer and the new Premier to come to the conclusion that they had to help those students whom they have literally pushed out of the education system because of the so-called reforms they made.

Not once, in spite of all the advice they got from so many educators, did they understand or accept the fact that they had caused a problem—not once. And only in the last month did they commit \$50 million to help the so-called at-risk students. That's called a government that listens and consults? After eight years of being in government, after so many years of causing so many problems, you speak of that as something good the government has done, that they're listening? Ha.

Speaker, let me know when my time is up. I can't see the clock.

The Acting Speaker: You have a perfect sense of timing. It is now 9:30 of the clock.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow afternoon.

The House adjourned at 2128.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Public Safety and Security / ministre de la Sécurité et de la Sécurité publique
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre associé de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement, ministre de la Culture
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Rob (PC)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises		
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)		
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)		
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC) Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services / ministre des Services à la collectivité, à la famille et à l'enfance		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Hon / L'hon Carl (PC) Minister of Citizenship, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires civiques, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)
Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Margaret (PC)	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Nepean-Carleton	Baird, Hon / L'hon John R. (PC) Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs, deputy House leader / ministre de l'Énergie, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones, leader parlementaire adjoint	Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Newman, Hon / L'hon Dan (PC) Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre associé de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Alvin (L)
Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)	Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)
Nipissing	McDonald, AL (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Northumberland	Galt, Hon / L'hon Doug (PC) Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement	St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)
Oak Ridges	Klees, Hon / L'hon Frank (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	St Paul's	Bryant, Michael (L)
Oakville	Carr, Hon / L'hon Gary (PC) Speaker / Président	Stoney Creek	Clark, Hon / L'hon Brad (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Oshawa	Ouellette, Hon / L'hon Jerry J. (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles	Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh	Clearly, John C. (L)
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa-Orléans	Coburn, Hon / L'hon Brian (PC) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs	Thornhill	Molinari, Hon / L'hon Tina R. (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associée des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	McLeod, Lyn (L)
Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Boyer, Claudette (Ind)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, David (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Associate Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre associé des Affaires municipales et du Logement	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Gerard (L)	Timmins-Baie James	Smitherman, George (L)
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Toronto-Danforth	Sorbara, Greg (L)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances	Trinity-Spadina	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation
Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke	Conway, Sean G. (L)	Waterloo-Wellington	Young, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Sault Ste Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)	Willowdale	Duncan, Dwight (L)
		Windsor West / -Ouest	Kwinter, Monte (L)
		Windsor-St Clair	Munro, Julia (PC)
		York Centre / -Centre	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York North / -Nord	Sergio, Mario (L)
		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	
		York West / -Ouest	
		Mississauga West / -Ouest	Vacant

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

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

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