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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 5 May 2003

Lundi 5 mai 2003

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 5 May 2003

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 5 mai 2003

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): I rise today to mark the 88th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. April 24, 1915 was the start of a planned and systematic campaign to eradicate the Armenian people. One and one-half million Armenian men, women and children were brutally killed. At the time, the world community sat idle and did nothing. Thus, the stage was set for other genocides and human tragedies. In fact, upon unveiling his final solution for the Jewish people, Adolf Hitler noted to his aides that the world would not lift a finger because, in his words, "who today remembers the Armenians?"

What is doubly tragic about the Armenian genocide is that even today, 88 years later, much of the world refuses to acknowledge the horrific events. The perpetrators continue to deny the truth.

This open wound cannot heal. Peace can only be achieved when there is justice; justice cannot exist without the truth, and the truth is not divisible by two.

On April 27, I and our colleagues Gerry Phillips and George Smitherman were honoured to stand in remembrance with members of the community to commemorate the genocide. This is the fifth year I've been proud to participate in the youth candlelight vigil here on the ground of Queen's Park.

Recent events around the world will give all members of this assembly a chance to pause and remember the human tragedy of genocide and to give the survivors of this horror the recognition they seek and deserve.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It is my pleasure to rise in the House to express my full support for the initiatives announced in the throne speech last week. This throne speech is especially memorable because it's the result of consultations with over 10,000 Ontario citizens.

People have spoken, and I know many of my residents of Durham riding have spoken as well.

We've introduced many new initiatives, such as, for example, legislation enabling seniors to retire at a time of

their choosing, increasing payments under the Ontarians with disabilities support plan and, of course, tougher sentences for drunk drivers. These are just three of the important initiatives.

We've confirmed our commitment to proposals in the 2003 budget that include an additional 17 tax reductions for seniors, business and wage-earners in the province of Ontario.

It includes our commitment to implementing the report from Dr Rozanski on education. I would like to thank my constituents Jean Blair, Madge Cadan, Don Kerr and Bev Oda for joining me at the throne speech.

Don Kerr is a D-Day veteran, Madge Cadan is a veteran of the RCAF and Jean Blair is a veteran from the WRCNS. Don Kerr said he was pleased to learn of Ontario's support for the Juno Beach memorial for the World War II veterans. He also was very supportive of the recognition for health care workers who served courageously in the SARS emergency.

Free tuition for nurses and doctors and a number of other commitments all impressed my constituents. I'm happy that our Premier, Ernie Eves, is on the right track to bring Ontario back to prosperity.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Every time a taxpayer in Ontario views a television commercial from the Conservative government of Ernie Eves, or hears a radio ad, or reads a full-page ad in a newspaper, or opens a mailbox to find yet another pamphlet, that taxpayer must reach into his or her pocket to pay for what amounts to a blatantly partisan, self-congratulatory political message—and that cost is now over \$400 million.

The latest set of highway billboards, complete with the Premier's name, has added substantially to the cost to be borne by taxpayers.

The bombardment of the airwaves and the filling of the print media with Conservative propaganda at public cost is an abuse of public office, an abuse of Ontario taxpayers, a violation of the government's own weak advertising guidelines and a contempt of the Ontario Legislature.

The Eves Conservatives should repay the taxpayers of Ontario for their partisan ads from the huge partisan war chest filled with donations from the wealthiest and most powerful in the province.

It is time to pass the bill introduced by Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty ending partisan government adver-

tising by subjecting all such advertising to an independent review agency. Only then will the taxpayers of Ontario be protected from the abuses of the Eves Conservatives in this province.

CARDIAC CARE

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): There was a time in my riding when health care was sub-standard. There was a time when residents of my community had to travel in ill health to receive the treatment that they required. There was a time when a first-class city had Third World health care.

It gives me great pride to stand here today and inform the House that these days have passed. Thanks to the hard work of our government and the people of Kitchener, St Mary's hospital now has a cardiac care unit that can treat people where they reside. Gone are the days of long journeys for treatment when the Liberals and the NDP were in power. Numerous surgeons and specialists have been hired to assist in the development of this unit, and it pleases me to say that numerous services are now available to the residents of Kitchener.

When the cardiac centre is completed, residents of the Kitchener-Waterloo region and surrounding areas will no longer need to travel long distances or wait for extended periods of time for service. In fact, St Mary's General Hospital now has one of the shortest waiting lists for angiography in the province. Other services provided by this excellent hospital include non-invasive testing and pacemaker insertions. In addition, the hospital has a six-bed coronary care unit and 28-bed in-patient cardiology unit.

Health care in Kitchener Centre has come a long way. It has evolved from the once archaic, out-of-date system to a more modern, accessible, universal health care system that is unparalleled. We have some of the best doctors, nurses and health care workers in the province. I am glad that the government is committed to keeping this standard of service for the people of Kitchener.

The introduction of the cardiac care unit in my riding will bring to the residents of Kitchener what they have long deserved: a first-rate, world-class health care system that will benefit my community for years to come.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): This is Mental Health Awareness Week. It marks the 53rd anniversary of Mental Health Week in Canada. I salute all the mental health workers throughout Ontario and Canada.

Mental health affects most families. Approximately one in five Canadians will experience a mental health illness during their lifetime. In the speech from the throne last Thursday, April 30, the Lieutenant Governor said, "To help remove the stigma of mental illness and ease the suffering of those afflicted, your government is addressing the mental health needs of children and adults." However, the very next day, May 1, the Ottawa

Hospital announced that it would balance its budget by again cutting psychological services. After laying off the same number of psychologists last year, the hospital will be left with just one-third the number of psychologists as are at similar facilities in London and Hamilton.

John Service, head of the Canadian Psychological Association, says, "By cutting the services in the public sector, people of lower income just don't have access to psychological counselling."

The fact that psychologists represent a savings to the health care system should result in greater access to appropriate psychological services, not reduced access, as is the case in the Ottawa area and the Ottawa Hospital today—a sad state of affairs for Mental Health Week.

To all of those who struggle through this difficulty—congratulations to the health care workers. My heart is with you.

SARS

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Once again I would like to send my condolences to the families of all those who lost their lives through this terrible disease, SARS, and to again thank all of the health care workers of the health care profession—not only in this great city of Toronto, but in the greater Toronto area and in fact from clear across the province who came through in our time of need here in Toronto. We all agree in this Legislature that they did a tremendous job. Once again, I don't think we can thank them enough for the incredible job they did, at their own personal peril in many instances.

I do want to point out to the government that although we appreciate Bill 1 and the package they brought forward to help promote Toronto—and it is very much appreciated and it seems to be working, and we hope that it continues to work. But I want to point out to the government that the NDP has been working with the hotel-motel association as well as small businesses across this city from St Clair to Danforth to Gerrard: bars, restaurants, butcher shops. Everyone is suffering, and although some are recovering, some are not. The hotel-motel association, as well as the NDP, has called for specific measures, a training EI program to help them through, and there are things the small business community needs for help in their recovery.

So I'm calling on the government once again to please review those suggestions and come through for those sectors that are badly affected by SARS and need the government's help.

1340

WAR IN IRAQ

Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): A number of my constituents have been serving in Iraq, either fighting on the ground in Iraq or serving on board ship in the Gulf. I wish to recognize and honour four men from Six Nations in my riding who have done what our

federal counterparts would not. They came to the aid of our neighbours and friends in their time of need.

In recent months, these four men from Six Nations joined in the effort to rid Iraq of the tyranny it endured under Saddam Hussein's regime. When the call for action came, these four men—Aaron White, Sergeant Neil Anthony and Clint Doxtator of the US Marines, as well as Karl Green of the Army Corps of Engineers—served. I point out that they had to go south of the border to do this. While Ottawa continued to play it safe at home, the proud families and friends of these four men were left to hope for their safe return from Iraq after a shared victory with our American and British friends and neighbours—victory over tyranny and oppression and victory fought for and with the brave sacrifice and hard work of these four people from Six Nations.

ALAN KUZMICH
AND PAUL NEUDERT

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): The member for Brant.

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): Thank you, Speaker. It's good to see you.

I rise in the House today to pay tribute to the lives of two fallen police officers whose names were added to the wall of honour during the Ontario police memorial held on Sunday, May 4, 2003.

Police Constable Alan Kuzmich of the South Simcoe Police Service and Six Nations Police Constable Paul Neudert of the Walpole Island Police Service both lost their lives last year in the line of duty. On behalf of my leader, Dalton McGuinty, the Liberal caucus and, I'm sure, all of us, I would like to express my heartfelt condolences to the families and colleagues of both of these police officers. Our prayers and thoughts go out to you and will continue to do so. Constable Kuzmich and Constable Neudert demonstrated an ultimate form of courage and bravery, the same qualities shown every day by our frontline police officers.

I want to take a moment to commend every police officer who day to day, day in and day out, protects the residents of Ontario and provides a myriad of services that keep all of our communities safe. As the public safety and security critic, I have talked to many police officers and their families across the province to understand the dangers that police officers face on a daily basis. This loss is not only to the province, but also to those communities which they served.

The memorial itself is good. The memorial was created to honour those police officers in the province who lost their lives in the line of duty. This year, those names are added to the following: "Heroes in life, not in death."

SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): For the second year in a row, based on my private

member's bill, people of South Asian origin and their friends throughout Ontario are celebrating May as South Asian Heritage Month and May 5 as South Asian Arrival Day.

While most South Asians came to Canada from India, many others came from such places as Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Mauritius, Singapore, Malaysia, Fiji, the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and many other countries.

Today, South Asians make up approximately 7% of Ontario's population and are proud to draw upon their heritage and traditions while contributing to many aspects of culture, commerce and public service across our province.

South Asian Heritage Month is an opportunity to showcase the accomplishments and successes of the South Asian community. On May 1, 2003, I had the pleasure of joining many of my fellow colleagues, the consul general of Pakistan, Mr Ghalib Iqbal, the consul general of India, Mr Divyabh Manchanda, as well as the consul general of Trinidad and Tobago, Mrs Vernetta Calvin-Smith, and over 60 members of Ontario's South Asian community at the inaugural South Asian Heritage Month reception at Queen's Park. As a member of the first South Asian family in Ontario and a member of this Legislature, it gives me great pleasure to join with all members of this House in recognizing the month of May as South Asian Heritage Month and today, May 5, as South Asian Arrival Day.

It is my hope that as we continue to use this opportunity to enhance our understanding and appreciation of our rich culture, heritage and tradition, we continue to make Ontario and Canada the best place in the world to live, work and raise our families.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before I begin, I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming the legislative pages.

We have Patricia Beaulieu from Halton; Rebecca Bowie from Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh; Tyler Brown from Mississauga West; Felix Ka-Ho Chu from Scarborough-Agincourt; Aaron Clarke from Waterloo-Wellington; Alyssa Clarke from Erie-Lincoln; Brian Donohue from Thunder Bay-Superior North; Matthew Fabbicino from Burlington; Jaclyn Foster from Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford; Charles Katrycz from Parkdale-High Park; Natalie King from Simcoe North; Brennan Lane from Hamilton West; Thomas McBey from Willowdale; Benjamin Reitzel from Nickel Belt; Jenny Ryzhikov from York Centre; Vladimir Sikman from Windsor-St Clair; Rebecca Tallman from Algoma-Manitoulin; Kathleen Toth from Etobicoke-Lakeshore; Taylor Whittamore from Markham; and Angela Zhang from Scarborough East.

Please join me in welcoming our new group of pages.

VISITORS

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I know members of this assembly will want to join in welcoming to this chamber ambulance dispatchers from across Ontario, members of OPSEU.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

NOROUZ DAY ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR LE JOUR DE NOROUZ

Mr Caplan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to proclaim the first day of spring as Norouz Day / Projet de loi 15, Loi proclamant le premier jour du printemps Jour de Norouz.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr David Caplan (Don Valley East): Ontario's citizens of Persian descent have made significant contributions to the development of the province. The traditions have enhanced the rich cultural fabric of Ontario.

"Norouz" in Persian means New Year Day, and it is the beginning of the year for the people of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran and Tajikistan. It is also celebrated in the new year by the people of Iranian stock, particularly the Kurds, in the neighbouring regions of Georgia, Iraq, Syria and Turkey. It begins precisely with the beginning of spring on the vernal equinox. Norouz has been celebrated, in fact, since the ice age, with many ancient rituals and traditions.

Today, the ceremony has been simplified. The ritual table is laid and family members, all dressed in their best, sit around the table and eagerly await the announcement of the exact time of the vernal equinox over radio or television. Elders give gifts to younger members. Next, the round of visits to neighbours, relatives and friends begins. Each visit is reciprocated.

In Ontario, the traditions of Norouz and the celebration of the Persian culture are observed by the Iranian Canadian community as well as by others of central Asian origin. I am pleased to propose that we formally acknowledge this day and encourage all members of the House to ensure its swift passage.

1350

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2003LOI DE 2003 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE LA DIVULGATION
DE RENSEIGNEMENTS
SUR LES ADOPTIONS

Ms Churley moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 16, An Act to amend the Vital Statistics Act and the Child and Family Services Act in respect of adoption

disclosure / Projet de loi 16, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil et la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille en ce qui concerne la divulgation de renseignements sur les adoptions.

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

The member for a short statement?

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): I believe the members of this Legislature are aware that this is not actually the first time this bill is being read, and that the majority of members here support it.

I will remind people, once again, what this bill is about. It gives adoptive persons unqualified rights of access to their own original birth registrations and gives corresponding rights to birth parents. It allows birth parents and adoptive persons time to file no-contact notices if they wish to do so, and it makes counselling, which is now mandatory through the ministry, optional.

The time has come to pass the bill. I'm pleased to have read it again for the first time today, and look forward to the debate that's soon to come.

ORGAN OR TISSUE DONATION
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003

MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT
AU DON D'ORGANES OU DE TISSU

Mr Gilchrist moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act to amend various Acts with respect to organ or tissue donation on death / Projet de loi 17, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui a trait au don d'organes ou de tissu au moment du décès.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): What this bill hopes to do is raise awareness to an even higher level of the importance of organ donation. There are literally thousands of people in this province right now whose lives have been compromised by a failed organ, and who are currently on a waiting list. Many people in this province have done the responsible thing and signed an organ donation card; unfortunately, not nearly enough.

More to the point: despite your best wishes, as the law currently stands, after you pass, your family or loved ones actually get to pass the final judgment. Notwithstanding your wishes as to what should happen with your organs, someone else gets to make that decision.

This bill would do two things: first off, it would require that everyone filling out an application or renewal for a driver's licence or health card would be required to answer the question. You can still say no, but you would be required to answer the question and it would be law. Secondly, your decision would be deemed the final and binding consent for the donation of organs.

In this way, as tragic as the circumstances may be surrounding the deaths of individuals in this province, at

least you would have the comfort of knowing that somewhere else in this province, someone is benefiting from the most generous gift you could give: the gift of life.

REPRESENTATION AMENDMENT ACT
(NORTHERN ONTARIO), 2003

LOI DE 2003 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA REPRÉSENTATION ÉLECTORALE
(NORD DE L'ONTARIO)

Mr Brown moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to amend the Representation Act, 1996 to prohibit the reduction of electoral districts in Northern Ontario / Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur la représentation électorale pour interdire la réduction du nombre de circonscriptions électorales du Nord de l'Ontario.

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

The member for a short statement.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): This bill is actually a reintroduction of a bill that died on the order paper. This bill amends the Representation Act, 1996, to prohibit the reduction of the number of electoral districts in northern Ontario below the number of districts that existed on June 3, 1999. In effect, this maintains the voice of northern Ontario in this Legislature.

ANAPHYLACTIC STUDENTS
PROTECTION ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003
SUR LA PROTECTION
DES ÉLÈVES ANAPHYLACTIQUES

Mr Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act to protect anaphylactic students / Projet de loi 19, Loi visant à protéger les élèves anaphylactiques.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): This is the reintroduction of a bill that died on the order paper. The bill requires that every school principal establish a school anaphylactic plan. The plan would, among other things, develop and maintain strategies to reduce the risks of exposure that could result in anaphylactic shock at the school; communication forms and information about life-threatening allergies; arrange for training; development of emergency procedure plans for each anaphylactic student; and maintain current information on file.

With consent, school staff could administer and supervise the administration of the medication that is required to be taken during the school day. In the event of an emergency involving an anaphylactic student, school staff would be permitted to administer medication with-

out consent. No action for damages resulting from administration of the medication would be permitted unless the damages were a result of gross negligence.

I have over 7,000 names on petitions in support of this bill, and I recommend highly that this bill be passed.

ROAD SAFETY ACT, 2003

LOI DE 2003 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ROUTIÈRE

Mr Klees moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 20, An Act to enhance safety and mobility on Ontario's roads / Projet de loi 20, Loi visant à accroître la sécurité et la mobilité sur les routes de l'Ontario.

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

The minister for a short statement?

Applause.

Hon Frank Klees (Minister of Transportation): I will accept the applause and defer my statement to ministers' statements.

FISH AND WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION AMENDMENT ACT
(DOUBLE-CRESTED
CORMORANTS), 2003

LOI DE 2003 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LA PROTECTION DU POISSON
ET DE LA FAUNE
(CORMORAN À AIGRETTES)

Mr Brown moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997 in respect of double-crested cormorants / Projet de loi 21, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la protection du poisson et de la faune à l'égard du cormoran à aigrettes.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): This bill is a reintroduction of a bill that died on the order paper. The bill amends the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, 1997, to permit the hunting of double-crested cormorants, subject to specific restrictions.

Section 1 of the bill permits the hunting of double-crested cormorants from September 5 to the end of December in any year. It goes on to impose daily and seasonal limitations on the number of double-crested cormorants that may be hunted.

Section 2 of the bill makes it legal for a person to destroy, take or possess the nest of eggs of a double-crested cormorant.

1400

CARLIE MYKE AND BRANDON WHITE
ACT (SAFE SCHOOL ZONES HIGHWAY
TRAFFIC AMENDMENT), 2003

LOI CARLIE MYKE
ET BRANDON WHITE DE 2003
(MODIFICATION DU CODE DE LA ROUTE
SUR LA SÉCURITÉ
DES ZONES D'ÉCOLE)

Mr Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 22, An Act to honour Carlie Myke and Brandon White by amending the Highway Traffic Act to reduce the rate of speed permitted on highways surrounding schools and to ensure traffic safety in school zones / Projet de loi 22, Loi en hommage à Carlie Myke et Brandon White modifiant le Code de la route afin de réduire la vitesse autorisée sur les voies publiques autour des écoles et d'assurer la sécurité routière dans les zones d'école.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): This is a bill that died on the order paper as well. I'm reintroducing it.

The bill reduces the speed at which motor vehicles may travel on the highways surrounding schools. To those who don't understand, "highways," in the Highway Traffic Act, mean roads around schools. The rate of speed is reduced to 30 kilometres an hour in the case of two-lane highways and is reduced by 10 kilometres in the case of highways with more than two lanes.

The bill requires municipalities and trustees of police villages to establish school safety teams to review traffic problems surrounding schools in the municipality or village and report those to the municipality, the school board and the Ministry of Transportation.

One other piece of information I've gleaned from my research in North America is that when you do province-wide or state-wide rules like this, not only do drivers learn them, they also reduce the risk of anyone getting injured by 70%.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just before we continue, we have in the members' west gallery Mr Bob Frankford, the former member from Scarborough East and a member of the 35th Parliament. Please join me in welcoming our colleague.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I move that notwithstanding standing order 96(g), notice for ballot items 3, 4, 5 and 6 be waived.

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

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTION

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that the following amendment be made to the membership of a certain committee. I didn't know we had "a certain committee."

Interjection: Name names.

Hon Mr Stockwell: OK, I will, damn it.

Mr Dunlop replaces Mr Gilchrist on the standing committee on public accounts.

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

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday, May 5, 2003, and Tuesday, May 6, 2003, for the purpose of considering government business.

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

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1404 to 1410.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Flaherty, Jim	Newman, Dan
Baird, John R.	Galt, Doug	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Gerretsen, John	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bartolucci, Rick	Gilchrist, Steve	Parsons, Ernie
Beaubien, Marcel	Gill, Raminder	Peters, Steve
Bountrogianni, Marie	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Boyer, Claudette	Hardeman, Ernie	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Hastings, John	Ramsay, David
Brown, Michael A.	Hoy, Pat	Runciman, Robert W.
Bryant, Michael	Hudak, Tim	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Jackson, Cameron	Sergio, Mario
Clark, Brad	Johns, Helen	Smitherman, George
Clement, Tony	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Coburn, Brian	Kennedy, Gerard	Sterling, Norman W.
Colle, Mike	Klees, Frank	Stewart, R. Gary
Conway, Sean G.	Kwinter, Monte	Stockwell, Chris
Crozier, Bruce	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Tascona, Joseph N.
Cunningham, Dianne	Levac, David	Tsubouchi, David H.
Curling, Alvin	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Di Cocco, Caroline	McDonald, AL	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted	Wilson, Jim
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dunlop, Garfield	Molinari, Tina R.	Wood, Bob
Ecker, Janet	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Elliott, Brenda	Mushinski, Marilyn	

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Martel, Shelley
Hampton, Howard	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 74; the nays are 6.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

VISITORS

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): On a point of order, Mr Speaker, we have a page here from the fine constituency of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh, Rebecca Bowie. On behalf of Mr Cleary, I'd like to introduce her parents, Kevin and Susan Bowie, and her sister Dara, also here today.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ROAD SAFETY

Hon Frank Klees (Minister of Transportation): Ontario now has the safest roads in North America.

Applause.

Hon Mr Klees: Only having been on the job for a month, that's not a bad accomplishment.

This is a significant improvement since 1995, when Ontario ranked second in Canada and sixth in North America. Most importantly, the number of fatalities on Ontario's roads have dropped to its lowest level since 1950. We're proud of this accomplishment and we'll continue to work with our many road safety partners to improve safety across the province.

Our latest statistics show that since 1988 there has been a steady decline of 53.5% in drinking and driving in Ontario. This decline of fatalities in the province is significant. The government is committed to ensuring that this trend continues. We can't afford to sit back and get complacent.

Motor vehicle collisions continue to injure thousands and kill hundreds of Ontarians each year. Ontario still records about 16,000 convictions a year for drinking and driving—far too many. That's why we announced more ignition interlock facilities this week and will continue to advance that program.

Today, with this bill, the Ernie Eves government is taking further action to make Ontario's roads the safest in the world. To achieve this goal, we will continue working closely with a broad range of road safety partners and stakeholders across the province. These include police services, safety organizations, community groups, industry and individuals.

In the last legislative session, members will recall that the government introduced Bill 241, An Act to enhance safety and mobility on Ontario's roads. However, the proposed legislation expired with the end of the session. So I am pleased today to reintroduce the Road Safety Act, 2003, for first reading. The bill contains measures to enhance the safety of Ontario's roads and to protect the lives of all those who use them. It also contains some refinements that have been incorporated since the fall, in response to input we've received from interested parties and many of the members in the House. We've listened to concerns and we've acted on them.

The proposed measures are grouped under four general themes. These themes are: promoting responsible driving behaviour; complementing and building on the work being done by our road safety partners to enhance road safety; strengthening our ability to enforce the safety of commercial vehicles; and making construction zones safer for workers, as well as motorists.

The proposed bill contains a total of 14 legislative items. Some measures build on the tough approach to road safety our government has taken since 1995; others are being proposed in response to what we heard from road safety organizations and other stakeholders.

I would like to highlight some of the proposed measures of the honourable members here today, beginning with the theme of promoting more responsible driver behaviour.

The first proposal is a province-wide crackdown on street racing. Under the proposed bill, those determined to race their vehicles on public roads would face immediate seizure of their vehicle, a 48-hour licence suspension or both. These actions are designed to safeguard members of the public from this dangerous activity.

In addition, the proposed bill would ban nitrous oxide systems that are fully connected and functional in any vehicle driven on public roads. As members may know, nitrous oxide is a compressed liquid gas that can be injected into an engine's combustion process to cause rapid acceleration. The proposed legislation would still allow nitrous oxide systems to be installed in motor vehicles for legitimate use at racetracks, for example. But if you drive on public roads, the nitrous oxide tank must be visibly disconnected. A police officer inspecting a motor vehicle may take a sample of any substance that is connected to the fuel system or engine. The police would also be able to order the removal and disposal of the nitrous oxide tank.

With this measure, we are sending a clear message, and that message is that street racing is illegal, dangerous and unacceptable in Ontario.

If passed, this bill will also allow the Ministry of Transportation to regulate how much after-market window tinting can be applied to the windshield and the windows of a vehicle. This would allow police officers to see into vehicles as they approach. This measure of course would also enhance road safety. It would allow drivers and pedestrians to establish eye contact more

easily and allow drivers to see better at night, as well as during bad weather.

There are a number of other important proposals in this bill designed to promote more responsible behaviour by drivers.

One of these proposals would make the use of booster seats mandatory for children who have outgrown standard child car seats but who are still too small for adult seat belts to be effective. Under this government's Road Safety Act, 2003, parents and legal guardians would be responsible for ensuring that booster seats are used for children who weigh between 18 and 27 kilograms, or 40 and 60 pounds, whose seated height is less than 63 centimetres, or 25 inches.

Health Canada statistics show that motor vehicle collisions are the leading cause of death for children from one to nine years of age. That is why this government wants to ensure that Ontario's children are protected.

This bill also proposes to give the province the authority to work co-operatively with other jurisdictions toward the future enforcement and collection of fines.

Those motorists who have outstanding driving-related fines will be caught under this particular piece of legislation. Under the proposal, the province would be able to enter into reciprocal agreements to suspend the licences of any Ontario driver who has outstanding fines in other jurisdictions. In the same way, participating jurisdictions could suspend the licence of any of their drivers with fines outstanding in Ontario. All drivers have a responsibility to drive safely at home as well as in other jurisdictions, and so we need to hold drivers accountable and get unsafe drivers off the road.

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The Road Safety Act, 2003, which I am introducing today, also contains a provision that would require Ontario drivers to use the left-hand lane only for passing on highways with three or more lanes and a speed limit of 100 kilometres per hour. This measure will help to curb aggressive driving behaviour such as tailgating or executing rapid or unsafe lane changes. This rule would apply to specified sections where conditions make sense, not in congested traffic conditions or approaches to exits from the highway.

The second theme of our road safety bill is to build on and strengthen the work of our road safety partners. Under this group of measures, we propose to introduce quick-clearance legislation that clarifies police powers to remove vehicles and debris from the highway expeditiously while at the same time protecting police against liability. It will allow municipalities throughout the province to set a speed limit of 30 kilometres per hour in designated areas where traffic-calming measures are in effect, and it will clarify for medical practitioners the requirements for reporting the medical conditions of drivers to the Ministry of Transportation.

With respect to medical reporting, the proposed amendment would change the current mandatory reporting requirements for physicians to a combination of mandatory and discretionary reporting as proposed by the

Ontario Medical Association. We listened to their concerns and we have acted.

Our bill would also broaden the range of health care professionals who can report medical conditions and impairments to the Ministry of Transportation. These professionals will be identified after the consultation with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

The third theme of our proposed road safety legislation is to strengthen the province's ability to monitor and enforce commercial vehicle safety. The measures we're proposing in our road safety bill include: marking the boxes of all dump trucks and trailers that haul gravel and other aggregates to improve load distribution; monitoring the safety performance of large vehicles, including road-building equipment and mobile cranes; cracking down on illegal commercial passenger vans; revoking the licences of motor vehicle inspection stations that are operated by commercial carriers that have a poor safety record; and introducing regular, province-wide mechanical safety inspections for taxis.

The final theme of our proposed road safety legislation is to make highway construction zones safer in Ontario both for people who work on the roads as well as for motorists. If these proposals are enacted, they would allow municipalities to delegate the authority to set speed limits within construction zones to municipal technical staff, double the amount of the fine payable for drivers convicted of speeding in a construction zone and require drivers to obey the hand-held signs used by traffic control workers in construction zones and maintenance areas, just as drivers are now legally required to obey the signs used by school crossing guards.

The proposed measures in our road safety bill underline the Eves's government's commitment to a modern, efficient and safe transportation system, a system that supports economic growth, creates jobs, builds a healthy environment and maintains our excellent quality of life here in Ontario.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues): We've just received these daisies from the women's shelters, and I would like unanimous consent for all the members to wear them in recognition of Wife Assault Prevention Month.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: Our government is committed to preventing violence against women. We continue to take a comprehensive approach to protect women and keep our communities safe. We have programs across nine ministries; we have doubled the resources to stop the violence since we've been in government, and we will continue to support the work of our community agencies and of everyone who is there to prevent the violence.

Sexual Assault Prevention Month has been recognized in Ontario since 1988. It is a way to underline sexual assault, create public awareness and highlight our government's commitment to preventing violence against women.

Statistics show that women between the ages of 12 and 24 are at a greater risk of sexual assault than any other age group—12 and 24. Only 6% of sexual assaults are reported to police, and in 70% of reported cases, the victim knew the assailant. These findings are deeply troubling. They suggest that before adulthood, many women may experience sexual assault and many will likely suffer in silence. This is simply unacceptable.

Our government has taken many steps toward raising awareness about this crime. Our message is clear: we will not tolerate violence against women.

Our most recent efforts to prevent sexual assault are directed at our youth. We continue to focus on young people. We are taking action to promote healthy relationships among young people. This is ongoing.

As part of our comprehensive approach, the Ontario Women's Directorate introduced a new sexual assault information Web site last May. This initiative provides an interactive, teen-friendly resource for youth to get vital information about sexual assault. This month the portal will expand to include more resources.

Our government believes that the best approach to preventing sexual assault is to influence social attitudes, particularly among young people, to keep them and their parents informed. The youth of today deal with many issues surrounding sexual violence. Their issues are real. By giving them resources, support and solutions, we give them a voice. By focusing on young people early, we will raise awareness and protect future generations.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I'm addressing the Minister of Transportation. This bill is similar to one that was introduced December 12 of last year. We have not sat in this House for 138 days. This bill was put forward on the last day of the sitting last year, and we've been away from this House for 138 days.

No one condones street racing, certainly not in this party, led by Dalton McGuinty, but the minister's bill of December 12 was flawed, very much so. It jeopardized those persons who were car enthusiasts. Hobbyists were put in a position whereby they may not have been able to drive their vehicles.

The Big Three automakers were concerned about that particular part of the bill as well because they sell after-market products for automobiles.

So the bill certainly was flawed in December; there's no doubt about it. It was so badly flawed that the Premier, in his wisdom, made the then Minister of Transportation the Attorney General.

I'm glad to see that the member opposite has taken upon himself to take construction-zone safety seriously and has taken part of my bill introduced on December 12,

2001. But he did not take all of the bill that I introduced, and he did not put in place all of the recommendations of the Van Rooyen inquest. Dick Van Rooyen was killed as a construction worker in Carnage Alley in my riding, near Ridgeway.

Why didn't the minister take all of the coroner's inquest results and recommendations? He only took part of them. Part of the recommendations was to double the merit points and have a written construction plan. My bill would have done that. But I am pleased that the minister took part of my bill of 2001 and has introduced it here today.

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The minister said he wanted to protect children. I wish he'd take another bill of mine, my school bus bill, and protect the 800,000 children who ride school buses in Ontario. Some 16,000 school buses travel our roads each and every day and, sadly, people continue to pass the school buses, with disregard for the red lights flashing.

This government will use vehicle liability, which is contained in my school bus bill, for parking fines, for red light cameras, for flying tires on trucks and for collecting electronic tolls here in Ontario—they will use vehicle liability, but they will not use it to protect the children on our school buses.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mrs Marie Bountrogianni (Hamilton Mountain): Minister for women's issues, if you are really serious about addressing the very serious issue of sexual assault, you won't only set up a Web portal; you will reinstate the 5% cut in funding for the sexual assault centres you so callously implemented in 1995. You will reinstate the funding that you also cut in 1995 to second-stage housing so that children of sexually abusive partners will learn that no means no. And you will implement the Hadley recommendations.

Minister, you know that 38% of sexually assaulted women were assaulted by their partners. You know that 93% of sexual assault survivors do not report to the police. But did you know that 60% of Canadian college-aged males have indicated they would commit sexual assault if they were certain they would not get caught? That should trouble all of us who have children in the university and college system. Some 50% of female and 31% of male children have experienced at least one unwanted sexual act. Of sexual assaults reported to police, 80% were female and 20% were male.

What is this government's record? Funding to rape crisis/sexual assault centres was cut by 5% in 1995, and there have been no funding increases in the eight years since. To date, the requests for funding have been denied.

With respect to your law-and-order reputation, your record on domestic violence is one of abandonment and neglect. A study by the Woman Abuse Council of Toronto shows just how little you care about really standing up for victims of crime. Of those convicted of domestic abuse, 37% got conditional charges, 25% had

their sentences suspended and another 7% got off with some house arrest. Under your watch, only 20% of abusers serve any time in jail; the rest just walk away.

I'm proud to say that under a Dalton McGuinty government, we will assist victims of date rape drugs and crack down on their use. We will increase funding to sexual assault centres and we will reinstate funding to second-stage housing.

I challenge you, Minister, and your Premier to steal those ideas from us as well. If you don't, tell your Premier to find the courage to call an election and let's get some real change in this province.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): Liberals worried about people stealing ideas? I've seen everything. My Lord.

Mr Speaker, you couldn't tell there was an election in the air, could you? The Minister of Transportation comes walking into the House with what essentially is a housekeeping bill, at a time when the government is supposed to be here challenging Ontarians and challenging this Legislature with new ideas about what direction this government should be taking and what we should be doing as legislators to deal with the many issues that confront us in Ontario.

We listened. There was a throne speech last week and we expected that the government was going to come forward with something really concrete, something really solid that helps us deal with the many complex issues we have facing us today. We have people in the galleries who have issues they want dealt with. What does this government do? It comes in with a Minister of Transportation who brings in basically what is a housekeeping bill, at a time when we should be dealing with real issues. Boy, do I know there's an election around the corner when you see a government come in with what's going on over here.

They have talked about how they've been good for drivers and they've been good for highways. Does this government not remember the list of things that it has done in government since 1995? You're the guys who went out and privatized highway maintenance in this province. You can't find a snowplow when you need it because you're in the ditch somewhere and there's all kinds of snow but there's no snowplow. It's been a dismal failure. It's been nothing but a problem. We've got more people who get stranded on highways across this province since you guys privatized winter road maintenance. On top of that, you guys went out and privatized Highway 407 and people are now having to pay skyrocketing rates when it comes to tolls.

I say to the government across the way, you've done something positive when it comes to roads in this province? Let's not forget one of the first things that you did. You went and downloaded the highways that used to be owned and operated by the province of Ontario and you put them on the back of municipalities who don't

have the money to maintain them. Go riding on those used-to-be highways that we now call municipal roads that have absolutely no infrastructure left to them.

So I say to this government, if you want a real plan, come over here to the NDP caucus. Look at what Howard Hampton has. We have the plan to put these things in order. I'll leave the rest of the time to my good colleague; out of time.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): On behalf of the New Democratic Party, I'd also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the provincial Daisy of Hope campaign—that's why we're wearing these daisies today—making the month of May a public awareness education program targeting the issue of domestic violence, as we also today announce that May is Sexual Assault Prevention Month.

I was hoping that the minister would have more concrete suggestions and recommendations and indeed would be announcing today that her government would be reinstating the 5% cut that was made to rape crisis centres and shelters back in 1995. As the minister knows, shelters have been writing letters to all of us over the last several months saying that they cannot manage, they're going deeper and deeper in the hole and they're unable to provide the services to those women who desperately need their help.

Minister, I want to say to you that women's safety depends on their ability to access the means to protect and support their children and themselves. Without fair and equal access to housing, work and income supports, women are made victims. Without equitable legal, anti-violence and neighbourhood supports and services—those very services that your government has cut—women are left increasingly defenceless against abuse.

Howard Hampton and the NDP have a plan to combat violence against women with a comprehensive freedom from fear strategy that provides women the social, economic and legal tools to protect themselves and their families from abuse. These include funding of community-based services for women and children through neighbourhood supports and through emergency services such as crisis lines, adequate shelter funding, a \$3.6-million second-stage housing allocation, and sexual assault and rape crisis centres.

We would fund legal reforms and services that provide women equal protection and representation, including legal aid to cover family law and the implementation of the Arlene May and Gillian Hadley inquest recommendations.

We would ensure that women have the economic supports to flee their abusers and to protect themselves and their children and recognize and fund the ignored needs for services and advocacy for aboriginal women, women of colour, recent immigrants and women with disabilities. I'd ask the minister to fund anti-violence women's organizations and advocacy centres now and reinstate the money that's been cut.

Hon Frank Klees (Minister of Transportation): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In light of the comment by the member for Timmins-James Bay, who referred to the safety bill as a housekeeping item, I would propose that the assumption is that there is nothing controversial in this bill. I would therefore ask for unanimous consent of the House that we move second and third reading of this bill without debate this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Just so everyone is clear, the Minister of Transportation has asked that we move second and third and reading without debate.

Is there unanimous consent? I'm afraid I heard some noes.

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ORAL QUESTIONS

PUBLIC HEALTH

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My lead questions today are to the Minister of Health. We're now hearing from some experts in public health care about their very serious concerns regarding our province's ability to cope with a public health emergency. Medical experts are saying that your government's neglect has decimated our public health system.

When you fired the last five public health scientists in Ontario some 16 months ago, we warned that you were leaving Ontario ill-equipped to respond to public health emergencies. Your spokesperson had this to say in response: "Do we really want five people sitting around, waiting for work to arrive? It would be highly unlikely that we would find a new organism in Ontario." We've now had it confirmed that a virus can travel as fast as an international traveller.

Will you now admit that you were wrong to fire those scientists and put the public health of Ontarians at risk?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Indeed, the honourable member has raised some important issues. Certainly, the review of public health since the SARS outbreak has put forward some interesting comments by detached observers such as Carlos Castillo-Chavez, a mathematical epidemiologist at Cornell University, who is quoted in today's Toronto Star and Washington Post as saying that our response to the SARS outbreak is "a triumph of public health." Dr Clifford McDonald, a medical epidemiologist at US Centers for Disease Control, said on April 24, "The Canadian public health response to this outbreak has been exemplary." Dr Julie Gerberding, the director of US Centers for Disease Control, said, "Canada has provided tremendous leadership. We learned more than we could contribute."

The verdict is in, certainly in terms of Ontario's and Canada's response to public health. Are there things that we can learn? Certainly there are, and that is what our review will be all about: to learn from the experience and to be sure we're even more ready next time.

Mr McGuinty: First of all, I hope the minister mis-spoke himself. It did not really mean that the verdict was in. It did not really mean that the review that he's about to conduct, or has conducted, is some kind of an academic exercise.

Dr William Bowie is the head of the infectious diseases program at UBC. He's one of the experts that Ontario had to turn to because you had fired all our local experts. Here's what he said: "SARS was an accident waiting to happen. Because of the priorities of the government, the cost-cutting measure, the conditions were great for SARS to take hold." Do you know what he found when he arrived in Ontario? He said, "We had to start from scratch. Ontario doesn't seem able to pull together an integrated effort, either for pandemic planning or do deal with bioterrorism. It's gotten progressively worse. Advice has been ignored now for a long, long time."

Will you now admit that it was wrong to ignore the advice of our experts, and that you were wrong to fire our scientists?

Hon Mr Clement: I wish to inform this House, as perhaps many members already know, that the funding for public health in Ontario, even in last year's budget, was more than \$804 million. That's an increase of more than \$100 million since the year 2000. The honourable member talks about cost-cutting measures. He is confused again. The number has been increasing because our commitment to public health has been increasing. Do we have more to learn? Of course we do. I would certainly welcome the honourable member's constructive criticism at the appropriate time when the review is conducted. But when it comes to ensuring that we have an infrastructure for public health, our commitment is second to none.

Mr McGuinty: After the Walkerton tragedy, Mr Justice Dennis O'Connor made it perfectly clear that it was absolutely essential that you invest more money in public health, so we understand the need for an immediate infusion of money subsequent to Walkerton.

You went on to fire our last five public health scientists. You replaced them with lab technicians. New York state has 150 public health scientists; Ontario has none.

Then there are those experts who just left. Neal denHollander used to head the standards and development section of the public health lab. Here's what he said about why he left: "I saw the public health labs and the public health units being underfunded and undersupported and being dismantled from the inside out. I didn't want to be any part of that."

Will you now admit, Minister, that you have left our public health system seriously underresourced and incapable of reacting in the best way possible to a serious public health challenge like SARS?

Hon Mr Clement: Even last year, funding for our Ontario laboratories increased by 33%, to \$62.6 million. But when the honourable member talks about a specific item, public health scientists, and says that there are no public health scientists in Ontario, sir, I would say to you that is an insult to our public health scientists at Mount

Sinai, it is an insult to our excellent, world-class public health scientists at UHN, an insult to the public health scientists at Sunnybrook and Women's, and I could go on. We have excellent public health scientists in the province of Ontario doing world-class work. We on this side of the House are proud of them.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Mr McGuinty: My question is for the minister. Minister, you're making my point for me. You have gutted the institutional capacity of the ministry to address public health challenges. We have been relying on volunteers to grapple with SARS in the province of Ontario.

Here's Dr Allison McGeer, head of infection control at Toronto's Mount Sinai. She says, "It's been very clear to us that we were going to pay for the public health dismantling that has happened under the provincial and municipal governments."

Dr Susan Richardson, head of microbiology at Sick Kids, says that we are surviving SARS in spite of the provincial government. She says, "The ability to respond to this outbreak came from the efforts of individuals, not the government." She says that "Individual scientists dropping everything else to help out was the only reason we have survived this outbreak against all odds."

We beat this thing because of well-meaning, expert people who volunteered their services. You gutted the institutional capacity of the ministry to address public health challenges. Why won't you admit that?

Hon Mr Clement: The honourable member calls people like Dr McGeer and Dr Low "volunteers." We on this side of the House call them dedicated professionals doing their job on behalf of the people of Ontario.

That's the difference between the two sides of the House. It is clear that we do have a commitment to public health on this side of the House, and we have been funding the best scientists, the best laboratories. To say that there's something wrong with them residing at our teaching hospitals and our universities, where they can do their best work, we on this side of the House disagree. We go to the best in the world. We fund them at our universities, we fund them at our teaching hospitals, and they have not let us down.

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Mr McGuinty: It's not a question of them letting us down; you let them down, Minister. That's what this is all about.

Here's what Dr Low had to say, in some considerable frustration: "We needed a centralized agency within the province to handle this sort of thing. We needed somebody in charge who had the authority to make decisions and the resources to do what had to be done to carry them out. Instead, we were borrowing and begging to carry out a proper investigation."

Here's what Dr Sheela Basrur said: "We would try to beg, borrow or steal staff from other health units. It's like ripping the bandage off one wound to stop the bleeding of another one."

How is it, Minister, that you have left public health in such a weakened state that we had to rely on volunteer

experts and we had to beg and borrow to respond to an emergency?

Hon Mr Clement: The fact is that we did have an all-hands-on-deck-effort from not only the international community and the national community but the province and the local municipalities to defeat what could have been an even greater tragedy than what we faced.

But you don't have to take my word for it. Indeed, it was Caroline Di Cocco, your member for Sarnia-Lambton, who said, "I think it was handled as well as it could have been. The experts were all there and they should be applauded for all they have done." We agree with that as well. Let's applaud our experts, let's applaud our public health officials because they did the job for Ontario and for Canada.

Mr McGuinty: I can understand, Minister, why you want to go there, but it is not about our experts. It's not about how they rose magnificently to the challenge and performed heroically—that's not what it is about. It's about the fact that you have gutted the institutional capacity of the government of Ontario to support public health and to respond to public health emergencies—that's what this is all about.

This is what Dr Basrur said about your throne speech last week in reference to the fact that there was not a single mention of public health: "I challenge you to find any mention of public health in there. We're in the middle of a wake-up call and people are still sleeping."

She is right, Mr Minister. The only way to guarantee that we draw all the lessons that should be drawn from this painful experience is to have a full, open, independent public inquiry. What I am asking you now is, will you assure us that we are going to have in this province, instead of your in-house review, a full public inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act?

Hon Mr Clement: There will be, of course, a full and public discussion and debate, and people will be inquiring about this and that and the other thing to do with the SARS outbreak. That is the commitment of Premier Eves; it is the commitment on this side of the House. We know that we have conclusions to make and things to learn, and we will be doing that.

But to say that this province and the people—the dedicated individuals, the doctors, nurses, medical professionals working with public health officials, working with the government, working with the federal and municipal governments—have not done their job, that is your conclusion, sir. That is the conclusion that you are making already, before there has been any review or any inquiry. I say, sir, you are out of line.

HYDRO DEREGULATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, exactly one year ago you and your Liberal friends unleashed hydro privatization and deregulation on the people of the province. You both said hydro privatization and deregulation would be good for us. You both said, "Nothing can

go wrong." A year later, hydro bills have skyrocketed; warnings of power shortages happen virtually every second week; communities like Wawa have been pushed to the brink.

Minister, on the one-year anniversary of your much-celebrated hydro privatization and deregulation, don't you think it's time to admit it has been a disaster and end it now?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs): We believe, on this side of the House, that we couldn't continue to go down the old path, the old monopoly of the old Ontario Hydro, that we had to do things differently, that we had to embrace the new reality. We had to do a better job for the people of the province of Ontario. We couldn't sit back and watch the old system that had accumulated more than \$38 billion of debt in Ontario. We had to embrace competition. We had to embrace allowing alternative energy on to the grid. It has not been an easy road. It took the better part of 100 years to establish the monopoly at the old Ontario Hydro. It will take more than a few months to adapt to a competitive marketplace. We believe in the long run it will be in the best interests of the people of Ontario. It will be in the best interests of enterprise in the province, and we're committed to that direction.

Mr Hampton: The minister mentions alternative energy. These dirty diesel generators that you want to start up across Toronto this summer, I guess that's the Conservative idea of alternative energy.

Look, Minister, you said nothing would go wrong. At the sawmill in Wawa they've laid off 150 workers. Why? They can't afford the price of electricity. At mine smelters and refineries across northern Ontario this summer they are taking very long shutdowns and laying off hundreds of workers. Why? They can't afford the price of privatized, deregulated hydro. People across southern Ontario will breathe the dirtiest air ever this summer.

The Pickering nuclear station is billions of dollars over budget, still shut down and still not producing power. The inquiry you told us about six months ago to find out what went wrong still hasn't happened.

Minister, how much evidence do you and the Liberals need before you admit that hydro privatization and deregulation is a disaster and should be terminated now?

Hon Mr Baird: The leader of the third party stands in his place and talks about the privatization of electricity in Ontario. That has not happened. He talks about deregulation. We still have strong regulation in Ontario. We've committed to introduce even greater regulation and consumer protection through a reformed and revitalized Ontario Energy Board with an outstanding individual from the province of Ontario who has accepted the position of chair. That will be tremendously good news for the people of Ontario.

While in government, his party sat back and did absolutely nothing. They didn't build any new power plants in Ontario. If you wanted to open up a windmill and put

power on to the grid in Ontario, his government made it illegal. Thank goodness on this side of the House we've got a group of people bringing on new sources of energy and adopting new ideas to realize the potential of Ontario. We look forward to seeing the future success of that initiative.

Mr Hampton: I want to tell the people of Toronto, your new source of energy this summer will be a diesel generator in your neighbourhood that is five times dirtier than the dirtiest coal plant, that will increase your risk of cancer by 50%. This is the Conservative and Liberal idea of hydro privatization and deregulation.

Minister, I want to ask you again. You see, you've tried to hide this by means of temporary rate caps. We find now that the temporary rate caps cost us \$1.3 billion and counting, which is added to the debt, which will appear on people's hydro bills after the election, and yet, even with the rate caps, the real hydro rate that appears on people's hydro bills has gone up by 45%. It seems to me this is all pain and no gain. Why don't you and the Liberals admit that and stop this insane move to privatization and deregulation now?

Hon Mr Baird: The leader of the third party never lets the facts get in the way of a good rant. I'm certainly pleased to have him back in the Legislature and to hear it first-hand.

He's wrong on his facts with respect to diesel power. The only choking that has gone on with respect to diesel power is that member travelling around the province of Ontario in his diesel-powered bus spreading his rhetoric. He's wrong in so many regards, I could literally spend my entire time correcting the record, and he is wrong.

HYDRO GENERATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): The minister talks about facts. Here is a fact. The Attorney General for the state of New York is taking your government to the international commission on environmental co-operation because your coal-burning plants, which you refuse to shut down, are polluting the air in his state.

Minister, New Democrats have said, "We are prepared to shut these plants down," and we've outlined a plan on how you replace the energy, something you and the Liberals refuse to do. So tell us this, Minister: why do you want to continue to pollute our air and our neighbours' air for another 12 years?

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Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs): I know the Minister of the Environment may want a crack at this in the supplementary. We are tremendously concerned about coal producing power. We have five coal-burning plants in Ontario; in fact, New York has eight. We generate 24% of our electricity in Ontario using coal, and that's demonstrably less than when he and his party were in government. When he and his party were in govern-

ment, they closed down not a single coal plant in the province. Do you know what they did? Nothing.

I'm proud to be part of a government where Ernie Eves has committed that by 2015 we'll close down all the coal plants in Ontario, the only jurisdiction in North America prepared to make that commitment. We are prepared to make the commitment to close down Lakeview by 2005; prepared to stand behind a moratorium on new coal plants; prepared to stand up and say we're not prepared to de-control any coal plant unless there's the commitment to change it.

We're also spending more than a quarter of a billion dollars on pollution abatement at both Nanticoke and Lambton, investments that he and his party failed to make. We will clean up the sorry NDP record on the environment.

Mr Hampton: The minister talks about commitment. Would this be his commitment to have the Pickering nuclear station producing hydro by the year 2000, three years ago?

He talks about the dirty coal-fired plants. Let me tell you, Minister, we didn't have to run them at 100%, full out, every day of the week, which is what you're basically doing now, and polluting not only in southern Ontario but elsewhere across eastern North America.

You say the Minister of the Environment wants to get up and answer part of the question. I welcome it. This is the Minister of the Environment who used to be the Minister of Energy, who said, "Oh, we've got lots of energy. We've got lots of electricity. The price won't go up."

Minister, this is the Attorney General for the state of New York. But he's not just talking about people there; he's talking about the 1,900 people in Ontario who died prematurely in this province because of the air pollution. He's talking about more and more schoolchildren in this province who have long-term chronic respiratory disease because of dirty air.

So tell us, Minister, since you seem to have all the answers, why do you want to continue to run these dirty coal plants and poison the air of more children and more people who are already suffering? Why don't you bring forward an agenda which actually shuts down these plants as soon as possible, rather than running them at 100% capacity all the time because you haven't had the forethought to bring on other generation when it has been needed?

Hon Mr Baird: I did notice with great interest that he failed to acknowledge why his government in five full years didn't close down a single coal plant in the province of Ontario. Neither did they bring forward a strategy to eliminate coal, not like this government and those of us on this side of the House.

The simple reason why the electricity generators didn't go at 100% when his party was in government is because tens and hundreds of thousands of people in Ontario were without work. There were no jobs, there was no hope and there was no opportunity.

The member opposite talks about coal. In Ontario in the year 2000, we were generating about 30% of our

electricity from coal. Last year, it was down to 24%. That's 24% of the needed electricity generated by coal.

Let's look at our major trading partners: our biggest trading partner, Michigan, 65%; Ohio, 87%; Indiana, 94%.

This government has a solid plan to reduce coal and then eliminate it responsibly, both for the hospitals and the people in their homes who need electricity and for the environment, which is important.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, we've been saying for some time now that you are making promises that you simply can't keep. You cannot on the one hand put \$5 billion into tax cuts and repair badly damaged public services and at the same time balance the budget.

Now we're hearing from some economic experts who are weighing in on this, Madam Minister.

The Canadian Taxpayers Federation, for example, has said, in reference to your budget, "They should get an Oscar for the best fiction movie of the year, the Fudge-it Budget."

The Globe and Mail Report on Business column talked about "accounting magic" and made reference to being \$2 billion in the hole by next year, not including electricity costs.

Don Drummond—I'm sure you'll be familiar with him, Madam Minister—chief economist with the Toronto-Dominion Bank, says, "In essence, they are presenting a \$2-billion deficit in 2003."

Madam Minister, can you tell us, which is it that you're going to fail to do next year? Are you going to fail to balance the budget, or are you going to fail to go ahead with investments desperately needed in health care and education?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Finance): I know the honourable member may find it difficult to believe that governments can balance budgets, considering what his government did when they were in power: they continued to run up debt. This government has not only balanced the budget for five consecutive years, we have paid down \$5 billion in debt, the first government that has been able to do that. Because of the economic plan we have in place, there are over 1 million new jobs in this province. Family incomes are up. This budget carries forward with the economic plan that we promised the people of Ontario in 1995 we would follow. It is a plan that is working, and the figures show it.

Mr McGuinty: You're running a deficit, Madam Minister. You might want to check out the April 30 report for the Dominion Bond Rating Service regarding Ontario. I'll quote from it. "The 2003-04 budget took on a pre-election flavour, delivering tax cuts and broad-based spending increases amid considerable economic uncertainty." It goes on. "Other signs of weakened fiscal discipline include reliance on asset sales to boost reven-

ue, \$771 million conditional on a federal surplus, budgeted in your savings of \$800 million, with few details on how these will be achieved.” It goes on to conclude accordingly, “Ontario could face a \$1.9-billion deficit in 2003-04.”

Madam Minister, you are making promises that you can't keep. You're trying to be everything to everyone.

We're going to be able to keep our promises because we're making the tough decisions. We're saying to Ontarians, “We cannot afford tax cuts at this point in time, not if we're going to invest in making badly needed repairs in health care and education.”

What are you going to do next year, Madam Minister? Are you going to run a deficit or are you going to further cut health care and education?

Hon Mrs Ecker: The honourable member says he's going to keep his promises. Would that be the promise to raise the business taxes in this province so he can kill jobs? Because he's promised to do that. Would that be the promise to take back the tax relief that this government is giving seniors? Because he's promised to take back, take away, the tax relief for seniors. Would that be the tax relief for the parents who want to choose independent schools? Because they promised to take back that tax relief.

On this side of the House we recognize the value and the importance of tax relief for economic growth, tax relief to create jobs. If he doesn't think this is a good-news budget, perhaps he should listen to his constituents, because the president of the Greater Ottawa Chamber of Commerce, his chamber of commerce, called this a good-news budget. Perhaps you should listen to your constituents.

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question? The member for Waterloo-Wellington.

Interjections.

The Speaker: We'll wait until it gets quiet.

The member for Waterloo-Wellington has the floor.

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): My question is for the Minister of Public Safety and Security. First of all, I want to compliment him on his important announcement today to put 1,000 new front-line police officers on the streets of the province of Ontario.

Applause.

1510

The Speaker: I will give you the extra time. It wasn't your fault. The other side was clapping.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. We've had our fun. The member is trying to ask the question. You're now interrupting him.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order, please. The member for Waterloo-Wellington has the floor.

Mr Arnott: Many professional firefighters who work in cities and serve during their free time as volunteers

have been threatened and forced by their union to quit their volunteer posts. These double-hatters don't have appropriate and needed legal protection in Ontario.

My private member's Bill 30 was intended to protect the rights of these double-hatters to volunteer in their home communities. Although defeated at third reading on December 11, more than two thirds of the Conservative members present voted for it, three opposition members defied their whip to support it, and the rest of the Liberal and NDP members present were opposed.

Since that time, the government has recognized the magnitude of the problem and is acting on the need to have it resolved in another way. In January the minister appointed a retired judge, the Honourable George Adams, to conduct talks with fire services and stakeholders and attempt to resolve the conflict arising out of the union's effort to phase out and eliminate these volunteer firefighters. The minister deserves credit for taking this initial step.

It is my understanding that the report was presented to the minister's office about a month ago. Is the minister aware of the contents of Justice Adams's report and will the minister update this House regarding Justice Adams's recommendations on double-hatter firefighters? Will he table Justice Adams's report with the House?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): I thank the member for the question. I want to thank him as well for the compliment on today's announcement. I will just mention that this is now 2,000 police officers. And I should mention, unlike the Liberals, we costed our promise and we kept our promise.

With respect to the question related to two-hatters, I did indeed appoint Justice Adams to conduct a mediation with the stakeholders to see if we could achieve a consensus on this very controversial issue, and members of this Legislature appreciate just how controversial and divisive it can be. I regret to report that Justice Adams was unable to achieve a consensus. We are now studying his report. He was kind enough to make some recommendations and we're looking at how we can further pursue the issue.

Mr Arnott: I want to thank the minister very much for his commitment to public safety, but I also want to remind him that time is essential. Every day without appropriate legal protection for firefighters who want to volunteer is a day they can be subject to threats, harassment and pressure to resign as volunteers in their home communities. They deserve to have the freedom to volunteer and be protected.

Most of the stakeholders clearly agreed. That is my understanding, certainly. Bill 30 was supported in principle by the Ontario fire marshal, and the amended Bill 30 was supported by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs and the Fire Fighters Association of Ontario.

The seven hours of debate that MPPs gave Bill 30 was unprecedented for a private member's bill, going back,

I'm told, to 1950. Clearly there is exceptional interest on this issue from this House.

I ask the minister, what assurance will he provide that professional firefighters who volunteer will be free from union harassment? Will he act upon Justice Adams's recommendations and, if government legislation like Bill 30 is in fact required, when will he introduce it?

Hon Mr Runciman: Justice Adams's goal was to make every effort to achieve a consensus. He was unable to do that, and he indicated to me at the outset that if he was unable to achieve a consensus, he felt no obligation to make recommendations to the government. But he has indeed provided advice. He has suggested ways in which we can approach this issue.

I share the member's concerns with many of the volunteer fire associations across this province in some of the smaller municipalities that depend heavily on volunteers to provide adequate service to their communities. This is a significant public safety issue. I am working on this. I can assure the member and other members of the House that I am planning to take proposals to my colleagues and hopefully to the House in the not-too-distant future.

AIR QUALITY

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, as you know, Ontario has some of the dirtiest air in North America. Smog contributes to the deaths of some 1,900 Ontarians every single year. Childhood asthma rates have quadrupled in the last 20 years. The single greatest cause of admission for children into Ontario hospitals is asthma aggravated by smog.

As you well know, the Minister of Energy has a plan to introduce diesel-powered supplementary generation into Ontario communities for this summer. I'm just wondering where you stand on this issue, Minister. I'm wondering how you can possibly justify, as defender of the environment, as defender of the interest of Ontarians when it comes to the right to breathe in clean air this summer, how is it that you can possibly support this move by the Minister of Energy to bring filthy diesel-fired supplementary generation into Ontario communities this summer?

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I'm not certain that your definition of "plan" is quite accurate. I think what the Minister of Energy has provided you with is an outline due to an emergency. I hope—and I suppose we all hope—that this does not come about. From the Ministry of the Environment's point—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'm sorry?

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order.

Hon Mr Stockwell: From the Ministry of the Environment's point of view, we've made a number of initiatives to clean up the air in the province of Ontario. We've taken great steps to clean up those coal-fired

plants, and we all agree that the best-case scenario would be to have the coal-fired plants closed. We've made it a commitment in 2005 to close Lakeview, and in 2015 to close the other two in this shed that are operating.

We take the environment very, very seriously. We believe in clean air, and I think if you look at the initiatives that we've brought forward as a government, including Drive Clean—

Interjections.

Hon Mr Stockwell: It would be helpful if Smitherman wouldn't talk because we'd have even cleaner air. But including Drive Clean, we have made a number of initiatives. We've been very focused on cleaner air, and we'll continue to do so.

Mr McGuinty: It's just as I thought, Minister: you cannot defend the indefensible. It is simply not acceptable in Ontario, at the beginning of the 21st century, in a highly technologically developed jurisdiction, that we're going to introduce into Ontario communities this summer, after we've been experiencing a record number of smog days—we had 27 last summer. It is completely unacceptable for us to bring in filthy diesel-fired supplementary generation into Ontario communities.

It reflects kind of a laissez-faire intellectual bankruptcy. Surely we can do better than this. What about an aggressive plan for energy conservation? What about enlisting the support of Ontarians when it comes to reducing electricity usage this summer? Is it not less expensive for us to get people to conserve than it is for us to add supplementary filthy electricity this summer? Again, Minister, I ask you in your capacity as defender of the environment and as defender of the right of seniors and children in particular to breathe in clean air this summer, how can you possibly stand there and do nothing while your Minister of Energy says he's going to go ahead and put in those filthy supplementary diesel-fired generators this summer?

Hon Mr Stockwell: What is truly breathtaking is that you have the gall to stand in your place and talk about closing coal-fired plants when merely a few seats down the front row of your front bench, your Minister of the Environment operated in this province for five years, and didn't close one plant or shut one day of coal-fired burning plants. Now you stand in your place demanding administrations past who have committed to closing coal-fired plants to move forward upon closing. That is the unmitigated gall and unbelievable nature of a Liberal. When you have the levers of power to do something, you sit on your thumbs. When you're in opposition, you've got wonderful ideas you can't afford or implement because when you get into government, you realize you put guys into the Ministry of Environment and they couldn't close one minute of coal-fired plants in this province, and that's what we're doing.

1520

VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mrs Julia Munro (York North): My question is—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): We'll wait so we can hear you. The member for York North.

Mrs Munro: My question is for the Attorney General. Since this government was elected we have made great strides in ensuring that Ontario is a safe place to live, work and raise a family. One of the initiatives that I am proud of as a member of this government is our commitment to ensuring that victims of crime receive the services and support they need.

Last week the Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness, which is located in Newmarket in my riding of York North, received a grant for \$47,500 from this government. This investment was made possible through our research and revictimization prevention grants program. I was wondering if the Attorney General could inform this House about the program and how it is able to assist the victims of crime, especially women and children, to receive the services they need and to help prevent victimization in the future.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I'm pleased to say that last Friday the Eves government provided 10 organizations across our province with a total sum of over \$450,000 to assist victims of crime. All of this money will be used in local communities, as we believe that is where the money can be best spent.

As part of the Eves government's \$2.5-million research and revictimization prevention grants program, the Canadian Centre for Abuse Awareness will develop a pilot follow-up service for children and families in the child victim/witness program after the court preparation process is complete. This investment will help provide additional information and support for children and youth who are struggling with the court process.

These 10 organizations are the first to receive grants from this program. I am pleased to state that this worthy program is funded from our victims' justice fund. Money for the fund is collected through a victim fine surcharge applied to provincial and federal fines and it is dedicated solely for providing services to victims. This was an initiative of our government and we're proud of it.

Mrs Munro: Thank you for your response, Minister. I'm proud to be a member of a government that places emphasis on the rights of victims of crime. For instance, I know my constituents applaud this government's initiatives such as the Victims' Bill of Rights and the Victim Empowerment Act, which allows the victim to attend and make a presentation at Ontario parole board hearings.

I was wondering if the Attorney General could inform this House and the people of Ontario of some of the other communities that will benefit from these grants that will be of benefit to victims of crime and briefly explain for what the grant money will be used.

Hon Mr Sterling: Again, this government has focused more on victims' services than any previous government, and we are known in North America as leaders in this area.

With regard to some of those 10 other grants, I can inform the House that the women and children who use

services of the Family, Youth and Child Services of Muskoka will receive an organizational benefit of \$22,000. This money will be invested in a project that bridges the gap in services for sexually abused children and their families. This project will see the formation of a peer support group for parents and a structured children's activity group focused on enhancing self-esteem and social skills for the affected children and their siblings.

The Waterloo regional branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association will receive almost \$50,000 to support the development of the infrastructure of services for male victims of sexual assault and trauma, including a toll-free telephone support service and the creation of workshops with professional community-based therapists.

All of these grants are to worthwhile groups like the three we have found out about today. We will continue to support these community groups as they deliver the services even better than the province can.

MEDICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is to the Minister of Health. Today we are joined in the gallery by Irene Hsu. Mrs Hsu lost her husband last month. She says that your government's Medical Review Committee and its controversial audits of physicians are responsible.

As you know, Dr Anthony Hsu went through enormous stress after undergoing an unjust and punitive Medical Review Committee audit. Will you do the right thing today and, in the name of Dr Hsu, call an immediate moratorium on Medical Review Committee audits and an independent review of the entire process?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Certainly, my condolences are with the Hsu family. I'm sure that the honourable member will understand that I will not comment any further on the circumstances of the untimely death of Dr Hsu.

I would, however, like to comment on the Medical Review Committee and the nature of the innovations that we are pursuing there. As the honourable member probably knows, in 2001-02, the last year that I have full details for, there were only 98 audits done out of 20,000 physicians practising in Ontario. I wanted to put it in the proper context.

Having said that, the honourable member might be aware that in January of this year, we already implemented a new process giving physicians a chance to work with the ministry through an alternative dispute resolution mechanism, rather than going through the MRC route. We think that that's an innovation. The honourable member is probably aware that I've already decided to conduct a review of the MRC and the audit process. I announced that April 10 at the Ontario Medical Association annual meeting.

Mr Hampton: You would know that in communities across this province physicians are working endless hours to make up for the serious shortage of family doctors.

What do they get? Very often, they get punished in the form of a Medical Review Committee audit. Dr Nishan Jayawardene of Fonthill, a preventive health specialist, is closing his practice June 30 because of Medical Review Committee intimidation.

You know that family physicians have come to you and said, "Something is seriously wrong here." Will you freeze the process and call for an independent review, or will you wait until more doctors close their practices, or worse?

Hon Mr Clement: Let's be clear on what the intention of the Medical Review Committee is. It reviews and audits billings to the taxpayers of Ontario by medical professionals like physicians. We find out whether all of the insured services were in fact rendered, whether the service was medically necessary, whether it was in accordance with accepted professional standards and practice, whether there was any inadvertent, I'm sure in many cases, but nonetheless present, misrepresentation. I do believe it is important to have some form of review mechanism to protect the integrity of the Ontario health insurance plan.

Having said that, I'm firmly of the view, as I believe the honourable member is, that it is time to review the review and to ensure that we are using the best practices and the fairest practices for the medical profession, as well as for the taxpayers of Ontario.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Ms Sandra Pupatello (Windsor West): My question is for the Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation.

Eight long years and your government has taken our auto industry for granted. You've done so despite the fact that our auto industry is responsible for one out of every six jobs in Ontario. The results are telling. We've not attracted a new assembly plant to Ontario in over a decade. During the same time, 19 plants were located in the United States and investment in Mexico doubled. Last week's throne speech proved that nothing has changed. The auto sector didn't warrant even a single word in the throne speech. This, at a time when you've taken the last five months negotiating with Daimler-Chrysler to secure a new plant in Windsor worth 2,500 jobs, and an agreement has yet to be reached. You are even quibbling about how much you're being asked for with DaimlerChrysler.

With the auto sector not warranting even a single word in the throne speech, does Ernie Eves not get it? Does he not understand that without a thriving auto sector our economy won't grow?

1530

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation): The member is apparently unfamiliar with provisions of the Ontario Research and Development Challenge Fund, particularly the \$625 million that was announced two months ago by the Premier on the floor at General Motors in Oshawa, and was

greeted with praise, not only by the Big Five, but also by the parts industry and by the Canadian Auto Workers. This is a very important initiative in Ontario, as we seek not only to maintain but to grow the automotive sector in the province of Ontario. In fact—and the member for Windsor should know about this—DaimlerChrysler has been negotiating not only with her federal Liberal counterparts but with us in Ontario, looking to create quite a dramatic new initiative in the county of Essex.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Supplementary?

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): This may be news to your government and to that minister himself, who in the past has argued quite vociferously against cash to help locate plants in this province. Auto plants and auto parts manufacturers mean more than photo ops and places to give half-baked budgets. They support jobs, they support growth in this economy, and your government's been all but silent on the automotive industry. That \$600 million was a re-announcement, it was not particular to the automotive sector, and you still have not resolved the Chrysler situation in Windsor.

Not only will a proper level of investment by your government benefit Windsor through Chrysler, it will benefit cities like Chatham, St Thomas, Oshawa, Oakville, Kitchener-Waterloo and London. Minister, unlike you, Dalton McGuinty and the Ontario Liberals have real plan, a plan that has been endorsed by Ed Brust, the chairman of Chrysler corporation; it's been endorsed by Dennis DesRosiers; it's been endorsed by Buzz Hargrove. Why won't your government get off its thumbs, invest in the auto sector and help bring those jobs and growth to this economy? You've been asleep far, far too long.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Flaherty: I got you on that. But what I want to know is what the Liberals opposite have against skills training, what do they have against infrastructure and what do they have against research and development in the automotive sector in the province of Ontario? What do they have against Ford Motor Co building their new van, starting in September, in Oakville, Ontario? What do they have against Toyota, for the first time in the history of that company, building their premium brand Lexus in Cambridge, Ontario? What do they have against Honda motor company building their brand-new Pilot in Alliston, Ontario? What do they have against Daimler-Chrysler building their brand-new Pacifica—you can see them on the roads now—in Windsor, Ontario?

We've had tremendous growth in the auto sector, not only in those sectors but in the parts sectors. What do they have against CAMI building their new vehicle in Ingersoll, Ontario? What do they have against three shifts being run full tilt at General Motors in Oshawa? What have you got against the success of the auto industry in Ontario?

HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): My question is for the Minister of Culture. I understand that

the Ontario Museum Association has officially launched the third annual May is Museum Month. As we know, museums, art galleries and historic sites provide reflections of our past and present culture. These important resources are critical to understanding who we are and how important Ontario has become as a great place in which to live.

I know this government is very dedicated to heritage preservation. Just last fall, our government passed Bill 179, which included amendments to the Heritage Act, improving and updating the municipal designation processes. I also understand that your parliamentary assistant, the member for York North, has just completed a consultation process with all key stakeholders concerned with heritage preservation to determine how the ministry could improve the act further.

Minister, could you tell this House a little bit about the 2003 May is Museum Month initiative and how we, as members of this House, can get involved?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): I thank the member for Scarborough Centre for the question. First of all, I would like to applaud the Ontario Museum Association, particularly Anne Chafe, who is the president of the OMA, and Marie Lalonde, the executive director.

About this time last year we were at Doon Heritage Crossroads, a museum out in Kitchener, with Mr Wetlaufer and Mr Arnott, along with Marie and Anne, manning an old pumper to celebrate Museum Month.

It's important. Museums play an integral role in the culture of our small communities and our large communities and remind us all about our heritage, which leads me to the second part of what the member from Scarborough Centre was saying.

I want to thank Julia Munro for the role she has played in the consultation in terms of the Heritage Act. There are very important new things we can be doing to bolster the Heritage Act and preserve our historical buildings in this province. This consultation we had, along with other suggestions from our stakeholders, hopefully will move us forward to protect more of our historical buildings so that all of us can enjoy them for future generations.

Ms Mushinski: Thank you, Minister. I know I'll certainly be visiting my local museum, which is the Scarborough Historical Museum. As a founding member of the Scarborough Historical Museum's board, I'm particularly proud that my local museum is a living memory of our rural past, located in Thomson Memorial Park. I think it's important that we do plug our own museums.

Minister, I know that the Scarborough Historical Museum is one of over 200 museums in Ontario that receives the community museum operating grant from your ministry. I know too that you, before becoming an MPP, were the chair of the Markham District Historical Museum in your own great riding of Markham. I do appreciate and respect your familiarity with the need for our museums. I know that this experience would have

given you a valuable perspective on the importance and challenges of local museums, and I'm wondering, Minister, if you could tell this House how this grant supports our museums.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Our ministry provides approximately \$2.7 million to the museums across this province to encourage them in doing their fine work.

I will take the opportunity right now, since it is Museum Month, to congratulate my own museum, the Markham museum, and the chairman, Gunter Langhorst, for the role they're doing. I might say as well that on May 11 at my museum, the Markham museum, we're having a Mother's Day tea. So here's an opportunity for people to visit my museum and learn about it.

I will say this about the Scarborough Historical Museum. What they're going to do this month is have an historic perspective of Agincourt. I grew up in Agincourt. I think it's a very important event for us, because we learned at that time, through our museums, about pioneers like David and Mary Thomson and also about the First Nations burial grounds at Taber Hill.

These are things our children and grandchildren can learn. I thank our museums and hope we can all participate in Museum Month.

PICKERING NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is to the Minister of Energy. It's with respect to the promised investigation into the delays at Pickering. We were supposed to get information within days of the November announcement. We didn't. Months have passed. What happened?

Hon John R. Baird (Minister of Energy, Minister responsible for francophone affairs): The member opposite is indeed correct. We did commit—the Premier, the government, and I as energy minister did—to conduct a review into the situation at Pickering A, both in terms of the reasons and the reasonableness of the timelines and of the costs associated with refurbishing the first, and then four of the reactors at Pickering. We also would seek advice for the people of the province of Ontario, through their elected representatives. We've sought to find someone, or some people, with sufficient experience, particularly with respect to the scientific nature of the project—nuclear technology and public sector and private sector management. We will be coming forward in short order with just that.

1540

Mr Bryant: Well, we get no answer. Not days have passed, not weeks have passed, but months have passed since this has been promised. Not only can the government not manage delays into the Pickering refurbishment, you can't manage delays into the investigation into the delays at the Pickering refurbishment. This government's Pickering refurbishment is more than three years past its deadline, and counting. The budget for the Pickering refurbishment has more than doubled. The

investigation was promised months ago and nothing has happened, and it seems that the only contribution this government has provided to energy supply has been in screaming diesel, black-smoke-belching generators that are truly a symbol and a disgrace. Why would anybody in this province trust this government to manage electricity supply in Ontario?

Hon Mr Baird: I, like my colleagues, have missed the rhetoric of the member opposite and the hot air that he has spewed. To address the main issue with respect to the question, I will tell the honourable member that when we do announce the review, I'm sure he'll be very pleased with it.

PETITIONS

AMBULANCE SERVICES

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming-Cochrane): This is a petition to solve the staffing crisis at Ontario's ambulance dispatch centres.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the 12 ambulance dispatch centres run by the provincial government are chronically short-staffed;

"Whereas the Ministry of Health has admitted that only 30% of our new hires are staying;

"Whereas the government-commissioned report by the IBI Group of October 2001 said that the rapid turnover in staff is attributed to high workload, stress and relatively low wages;

"Whereas the IBI Group report said the dispatchers at other emergency services 'earn considerably higher wages for relatively lower workloads';

"Whereas the dispatching of ambulances is a key link in the chain of emergency response;

"Whereas the report recommended increasing the wages of provincial ambulance dispatchers to reflect the current market and the complexity of dispatcher functions;

"Whereas the report said that this would 'reduce the high staff turnover and attract qualified staff';

"Whereas chronic short-staffing and high staff turnover at our ambulance dispatch centres is a major risk to public safety;

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

"To protect our emergency health services and the health and safety of Ontario citizens, the Ontario government must immediately and fully implement all the recommendations of the IBI Group report, including wage parity with other emergency service dispatch centres."

CENTRES DE SANTÉ COMMUNAUTAIRES

M^{me} Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): J'aimerais présenter une pétition de la part de plusieurs des citoyens et citoyennes dans mon comté.

« Un centre de santé communautaire comme celui de Chelmsford offre une gamme de services qui aident ma communauté à améliorer sa santé globale. Mon centre répond à de nombreux besoins dans ma région, mais il manque cruellement un financement adéquat pour maintenir son haut niveau de qualité.

« Comme citoyenne de l'Ontario, je vous prie de considérer mon centre de santé dans votre réforme et de ne pas oublier les centres communautaires comme le mien qui attendent la chance d'avoir leur centre à eux. »

Je suis en faveur de cette pétition.

WATER EXTRACTION

Mr Ted Arnott (Waterloo-Wellington): This morning at about a quarter to eight, two of my constituents came to see me at my constituency office: Mr Keith Ritchie and Ms Burna Wilton. They gave me a substantial petition containing over 2,000 signatures. I'll read it to the House at this time.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas taking water for sale purposes is now recognized by Parliament as a great concern to Ontario residents; and

"Whereas the township of Centre Wellington has: (a) commissioned a comprehensive groundwater management study funded by MOE grant, recently completed but not yet fully assessed; (b) undertaken development of two additional wells to service current demand and modest future development in the major urban centres; (c) implemented strict conservation bylaws for domestic usage, and begun water metering for all usage (commencing 2003) in these same major urban centres; (d) has not yet evaluated impacts on more than 2,000 private wells lying outside the major urban areas which may be susceptible to the pumping of both municipal and other private wells; and

"Whereas the Ministry of the Environment is currently considering an application under section 34 of the Ontario Water Resources Act for a permit to take a daily volume of 1,091,040 litres from a site in Centre Wellington township, a volume nearly equivalent to the daily consumption of the former village of Elora (more or less 3,000 of the 21,000 inhabitants of the township);

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

"(1) Freeze all current applications for permits to take water for commercial (sale) purposes subject to review of legislation correlating provincial responsibility with municipal responsibility for usage of these resources, considering both local requirements and those of private commercial interests;

“(2) Expedite revision of current legislation governing these valuable water resources so that constituents have some substantial protection from the influence, on local groundwater supply, of pumping wells for the commercial sale of water;

“(3) Instruct the Ministry of the Environment to institute more comprehensive testing to establish the area of influence on groundwater supplies before issuing a permit to take water for pumping large volumes of water from a well adjacent to other wells; and

“(4) Clarify the meaning of the water-taking and transfer regulation introduced in 1999, which purports to prohibit the transfer of water from Ontario’s major water basins.”

Again, this was signed by in excess of 2,000 people, mostly residents of Waterloo-Wellington, and I’ve affixed my signature to the top of it as per the rules of the House.

HYDRO RATES

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I have petitions signed by hundreds, if not thousands, of people in the district of Algoma.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government has mismanaged the electricity policy of the province of Ontario;

“Whereas last fall the McGuinty Liberal call for rebates, although fiercely rejected by the government, gained huge public support. With no options open, the government introduced and passed a plan to rebate \$75 to customers and place a cap on electricity commodity prices at .043 per kilowatt hour;

“Whereas Mike Brown, MPP, has been fighting for rural rate assistance;

“Whereas the Ernie Eves government forces Great Lakes Power customers to pay into a fund for rural rate assistance; and

“Whereas rural rate assistance would reduce the distribution bills for customers by hundreds of dollars each year;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, support the efforts of Mike Brown, MPP, to have rural rate assistance extended to the Great Lakes Power service area immediately.”

I totally agree with this petition and affix my signature.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): J’ai une pétition ici signée par beaucoup des résidents de la communauté de Timmins qui lit telle suivie :

“To the Ontario provincial Legislature:

“Because the minimum wage has been frozen at \$6.85 since 1995 despite increases in the cost of living; and

“Because a full-time worker earning the current minimum wage in a large city is \$5,904 below the poverty line, and to reach the poverty line they would need an hourly wage of at least \$10 an hour;

“Because the minimum wage should provide people with an adequate standard of living;

“We demand that the Ontario government immediately increase the minimum wage to at least the poverty line ... and index it to the cost of living.”

I affix my signature to that petition and ask people to go to www.publicpower.ca, where they’ll see that commitment in the Howard Hampton campaign.

ALUMINUM SMELTER

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition with 400 names on it, including that of John Taylor of York North, which reads as follows—it’s regarding the cleanup of the abandoned smelter in Georgina:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the abandoned aluminum smelter located on Warden Avenue in the town of Georgina has been deemed to have heavy metals exceeding the Ministry of the Environment guidelines; and

“Whereas the site is adjacent to a wetland that leads into the Maskinonge River feeding into Lake Simcoe;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of the Environment to conduct a full environmental assessment of this site followed by a cleanup of the full smelter site.”

I affix my signature. I am in complete agreement.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): These petitions were sent to me by local 27, CAW, located in London, Ontario. They read as follows:

“Whereas the Conservative government increased fees paid by Ontario seniors and other vulnerable people living in long-term-care facilities by 15% instead of providing adequate government funding for long-term care;

“Whereas the Conservative government has therefore shifted the costs of long-term care on to the backs of the frail elderly and their families;

“Whereas this increase is 11.1% above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario;

“Whereas in 1996 Ontario abandoned its minimum requirement of 2.25 hours of nursing care per nursing home resident;

“Whereas the government’s own contribution to raise the level of long-term-care services this year is less than \$2 per resident per day;

“Whereas according to the government’s own study, government cutbacks have resulted in Ontario seniors receiving just 14 minutes a day of care from a registered nurse;

“Whereas the report also found that Ontario residents receive the least nursing, bathing and general care of nine other comparable locations;

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

We demand “the Conservative government eliminate the 15% fee increase for residents of long-term-care facilities, increase the number of nursing care hours for each resident to a minimum of 3.5 hours per day, and provide stable, increased funding to ensure quality care is there for Ontario residents of long-term-care facilities.”

I agree with the petitioners.

1550

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): Mr Speaker, the government’s lack of support for the long-term-care sector continues to be a real crisis. Over the winter months a new campaign by the Ontario Long Term Care Association delivered hundreds and hundreds of letters to each of our ridings. If I may, I will read petitions from the last session that are left over. I do want to do that, sir.

“Whereas the Eves government has increased the fees paid for by seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities by 15% or \$7.02 per diem effective August 1, 2002; and

“Whereas this fee increase will cost seniors and our most vulnerable more than \$200 a month; and

“Whereas this increase is 11.1% above the rent increase guidelines for tenants in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the increase in the government’s own contribution to raise the level of long-term-care services this year is less than \$2 per resident per day; and

“Whereas according to the government’s own funded study, Ontario ranks last amongst comparable jurisdictions in the amount of time provided to a resident for nursing and personal care; and

“Whereas the long-term-care funding partnership has been based on government accepting the responsibility to fund the care and services that residents need; and

“Whereas government needs to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$750 million over the next three years to raise the level of service for Ontario’s long-term-care residents to those in Saskatchewan in 1999; and

“Whereas this province has been built by seniors who should be able to live out their lives with dignity, respect and in comfort in this province;

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

“Demand that Premier Eves reduce his 15% fee increase on seniors and the most vulnerable living in long-term-care facilities and increase provincial government support for nursing and personal care to adequate levels.”

There are hundreds and hundreds of signatures on these petitions, and I’m very pleased to sign it.

CHILD CARE

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have petitions sent to me from people from Woodbridge. They read as follows:

“Whereas 70% of Ontario women with children under age 12 are in the paid workforce;

“Whereas high-quality, safe, affordable child care is critical to them and their families;

“Whereas the Early Years Study done for the Conservative government by Dr Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret McCain concluded quality child care enhances early childhood development;

“Whereas this government has cut funding for regulated child care instead of supporting Ontario families by investing in early learning and care;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the Ontario government adopt the NDP’s \$10-a-day child care plan, and begin implementation by reducing full child care fees to \$10 a day for children aged two to five currently enrolled in regulated”—non-profit—“child care; by providing capital funds to expand existing child care centres and build new ones; by funding pay equity for staff; and by creating”—20,000—“new \$10-a-day child care spaces in the province.”

I agree with the petitioners, and I have affixed my signature to this.

HIGHWAY 69

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines for the north; and

“Whereas the stretch of Highway 69 from Sudbury south to Parry Sound is a treacherous road with a trail of death and destruction; and

“Whereas the carnage on Highway 69 has been staggering; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government has shown gross irresponsibility in not four-laning the stretch of Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound; and

“Whereas immediate action is needed to prevent more needless loss of life; and

“Whereas it is the responsibility of a government to provide safe roads for its citizens, and the Eves government has failed to do so”—especially with Highway 69 south, between Sudbury and Parry Sound;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the Eves government to begin construction immediately and four-lane Highway 69 between Sudbury and Parry Sound so that the carnage on Death Road North will cease.”

Of course, I affix my signature to this petition.

OHIP SERVICES

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition signed by 300 residents of Keewatin and Kenora which reads as follows:

“Whereas the Harris government’s decision to delist hearing aid evaluation and re-evaluation from OHIP coverage will lead to untreated hearing loss; and

“Whereas these restrictions will cut off access to diagnostic hearing tests, especially in geographic regions

of the province already experiencing difficulties due to shortages of specialty physicians; and

“Whereas OHIP will no longer cover the cost of miscellaneous therapeutic procedures, including physical therapy and therapeutic exercise; and

“Whereas services no longer covered by OHIP may include thermal therapy, ultrasound therapy, hydrotherapy, massage therapy,... nerve therapy stimulation and biofeedback; and

“Whereas one of the few publicly covered alternatives includes hospital outpatient clinics where waiting lists for such services are up to six months long; and

“Whereas delisting these services has had a detrimental effect on the health of all Ontarians, especially seniors, children, hearing-impaired people and industrial workers; and

“Whereas the government has already delisted \$100 million worth of OHIP services,

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately restore OHIP coverage for these delisted services.”

I agree with the petitioners.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario awarded Canadian Waste Services Inc a certificate of approval for the operation of the Richmond landfill in greater Napanee; and

“Whereas XCG Consultants’ findings have identified that ‘landfill operations are having a statistically significant negative impact on surface water quality in the area’; and whereas groundwater needs further independent hydrogeological study to determine the migration of the landfill leachate;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully call upon the Ontario Ministry of the Environment to direct Canadian Waste Services to provide and install water filtration and disinfection equipment in those homes within 10 miles of the Richmond landfill.”

I will affix my signature to this petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 1, 2003, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): Let me just say that it’s good to be back, Speaker. It’s good to see you here.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Four and a half months later.

Mr McGuinty: Yes, it’s been a long, long time, and we are happy to be back. We should have come back a long time ago. But that having been said, unlike the Ernie Eves government, we can’t wait to get to work for the people of Ontario. Unlike the Ernie Eves government, we believe Ontarians deserve a lot better than what they’ve been getting. We believe quite simply that it’s time for a change in Ontario, and I mean real, positive change.

We’ve got a strong team, we’ve got good ideas, and we’re the only party that represents real change. The Tories, if we were to allow them to do so, would only bring us more of the same. The NDP, on the other hand, would bring us back to that painful experience of their government in the 1990s. The Ontario Liberal Party is the only party that represents real change in Ontario. That’s what I want to talk about today, the change that we’re going to bring to Ontario.

But let me just say this at the outset about the throne speech. It seems to me that when the best thing you can say about a throne speech is that the government stole a few good policies, then that government is long past its expiry date.

C’est un document cynique. Il me semble que lorsque la meilleure chose qu’on puisse dire à propos d’un discours du trône est que le gouvernement a volé quelques bonnes politiques, il est grand temps de repenser à ce gouvernement.

This throne speech, like the government itself, begs some fundamental questions. Where’s the energy? Where’s the imagination? Where’s the vision? Where is that passionate drive to improve life for Ontarians? Where is the leadership? All these things are missing as much from this throne speech as they are from this government. This is a tired, smug, self-contented government. They’re more than just satisfied with the status quo; they are very proud of it.

Let’s take a moment to look at that record of which the Tories are so very proud. After all, the Tories have had eight years now, and I think it’s important to ask ourselves, what is it that they have left us with? I’ll touch very briefly on five items.

1600

Here’s the first: seven out of 10 Ontario elementary schools don’t have enough textbooks. Five out of 10 of our students are failing standardized tests. The government’s plan for the future? They want to put \$500 million into private schools and they want to bring unqualified teachers into public schools.

Point number two: 900,000 Ontarians can’t find a family doctor. This government has made such deep cuts to our health care system, and our public health care system in particular, that it has seriously compromised our ability—the ability, in fact, of dedicated front-line workers—to fight frightening diseases like West Nile and SARS. What is the government’s plan for the future? To put \$3.2 billion into tax breaks for large corporations as a greater priority than a strong health care system.

Point number three: we're breaking records every summer now when it comes to smog days. What is this government's plan for the future? To put diesel generators into Ontario communities.

Point number four: since the Walkerton tragedy, more Ontarians than ever before have been buying bottled water, even those families that can't afford to do so. They're doing that because they don't trust their tap water. What is this government's plan for the future? This government keeps dithering and stalling instead of bringing in tough laws protecting our drinking water from pollution.

The last point: as financial managers, this government has added \$21 billion to the debt.

Also, a point worth keeping in mind: they sold the 407 for a song and they sold out Ontarians who use that highway. Their plan? Well, their plan is to continue to act irresponsibly. They have a \$2.2-billion hole in their budget and they have no idea whatsoever as to how they're going to fill that hole.

That is just a snippet of this government's real record and its bleak plans for the future.

Now, I don't want to be entirely negative. There are some good ideas in this throne speech.

For example, ending mandatory retirement is a good idea. That's why our colleague Mike Colle introduced a bill that would have done that last year—congratulations to you, Mike—which begs the question: why did the Tories vote against Mike Colle's bill?

Another good idea: seizing the cars of repeat drunk drivers. That's why our colleague Rick Bartolucci introduced his bill twice. He introduced that bill twice, which again begs the same question: why did the government vote against it, not only once but twice?

The throne speech says that we need more police. So why did the Tories criticize our plan to put 1,000 more police on the streets?

Then there are those promises found within the throne speech that were already made by the government but never kept. They promised to limit waiting times for cancer radiology to four weeks back in 1999. That hasn't happened. Why should anyone believe that they'll keep their promise this time?

Public school choice: this is an idea of ours that they stole last year, promised to do and then didn't. Same question: why should anyone believe they'll keep their promise this time?

This government is tired. They haven't come up with an original idea in years, except that utterly original and completely idiotic budget infomercial idea.

While I think of it, I want to offer congratulations to our colleague Sean Conway. If viewers didn't get an opportunity to watch Mr Conway in action last Thursday, then I would strongly recommend that they visit Hansard on-line and collect that speech. Sean reminds us what this place is all about. He reminds us of the richness of our traditions and our shared responsibility to respect and uphold those traditions.

C'est le temps de changement. C'est le temps de se donner un gouvernement qui va s'occuper des Ontariens et Ontariennes au lieu de quelques-uns de ses amis et de ses partisans.

It's time for a government that will build public schools to offer our kids the best education they can get, instead of a government that hands half a billion dollars to private schools.

It's time for a government that will commit to universal public medicare, instead of a government that favours a two-tier, pay-your-way-to-the-front-of-the-line health care system.

It's time for a government that will protect the environment, our air and our water, as part of an absolute commitment to public safety, instead of a government that views public safety as something you trade off for efficiencies.

It's time for a government that will build a strong economy with the best workforce and a great quality of life for all Ontarians, instead of a one-trick-pony government that has never been able to see past handing billions of dollars to large corporations.

The things I've just listed are things that we actually and deeply believe in. They weren't cooked up in a back room by unelected consultants who care a lot about winning but couldn't care less about good government. These are the things that we believe this province needs. These are what we believe the people of Ontario want. So instead of playing games with democracy, instead of cynical pre-election manoeuvring, we're presenting the people of Ontario with a plan to get them what they want and what they need, because fundamentally, we believe that is the role of government.

We have actually been presenting our plan to the people of Ontario for the past eight months. I would like to take the opportunity today to present it to Ontarians again so that it strikes a real, sharp contrast with last week's collection of empty promises and stolen policies.

Our plan for the economy is called Achieving our Potential. We call it that because, as a province, we're not; we're not achieving our potential. We're not even coming close.

In 1995, the productivity gap between Ontario and the US was roughly \$3,000 per person. Today, it's \$6,000. It has doubled. When it comes to productivity, which just means our ability to create wealth, 30 of 50 US states now outperform our province. This is the single greatest economic challenge that we face. We must close that productivity gap. If we don't, we'll lose jobs, we'll lose investment, we'll lose our ability to support health care and education, and our quality of life will erode.

Our plan to close that productivity gap, our plan for the economy, starts with fiscal discipline, something my friends in the government could use a little of.

We're going to balance our budgets, the same budgets that we're going to deliver in the Legislature, where they belong.

We will not add to the debt. This government has added \$21 billion to the province's debt, and they owe an

apology to the next generation of Ontarians, whom they are going to stick with that debt.

While they are at it, they might want to apologize to this generation of Ontarians for the hundreds of millions of tax dollars that they continue to waste. I'm talking about \$600 million on high-priced consultants. I'm talking about \$250 million on government self-promotional advertising.

Our government will use consultants only when absolutely necessary and when there is nobody in the public service to do that work. By the way, let me add this: we're going to celebrate public service in the province of Ontario.

1610

We are going to extend an invitation to Ontario's youth. We're going to invite our best and our brightest to commit themselves once again to public service in the service of all Ontarians. I want to send a message to those people who labour day after day, day in and day out, because they've had too much negative propaganda from this government for too long. We count on those people. They do a fine job. It's about time that this government should start to listen to their advice and take them into account.

As for those partisan government ads paid for with tax dollars, we're going to make that illegal. We're going to make sure that the Provincial Auditor has the power to enforce that. Here's my sense: I think the bloom has come off that advertising rose. I think when people now see those expensive ads running on our television sets nightly, they're getting close to being physically ill. If we have health care dollars in the province of Ontario, those dollars shouldn't be going into health care ads, they should be going into our hospitals. If we have money for education in the province of Ontario, that money shouldn't be going to education ads; it should be going into our classrooms.

Our plan is to keep taxes down. We're not going to ask families and small businesses to give us any more of their hard-earned money. What we're going to do is invest the money that we do have wisely. To that end, we will not go ahead with a \$3.2-billion tax cut that this government has promised large corporations. Our corporate taxes are already 10% lower than in the US. Cutting them further at this time will just lead to more cuts to services Ontarians desperately need. We won't do that. It would be nice to cut taxes further now, but we feel that it would be even nicer to know that there are enough textbooks in our schools, that our drinking water is protected and that our health care system is ready for the next SARS-type outbreak.

We'll leave it to the Tories to engage in a race to the bottom with Alabama. We'll leave it to the Tories to make the cynical promise that they can somehow cut taxes by over \$5 billion, repair the public services they so badly damaged and still balance the budget. The Tories are making promises that they can't keep. We're being straight with Ontarians so we can keep our promises.

We're going to build a great economy. We understand that the foundation of a great economy today is a strong

workforce. We're going to build the best in North America. In a world where you can borrow your capital, where you can buy your raw materials and where you can copy your technology, we over here in our party understand that the only thing left on which to build a high-wage economy is skills. We intend to develop the best workforce in North America right here in Ontario.

Our plan to build the best workforce in North America starts with a first-class post-secondary education system. We're going to open up 50,000 new spaces in our colleges and universities. We're going to freeze tuition for two years and improve student assistance. We're going to hire the faculty that we so desperately need. Under this government, Ontario now ranks—

Interjection.

Mr McGuinty: I'm sure that the minister opposite would be very interested in this statistic. Ontario now ranks 56th out of 60 states and provinces when it comes to investment in our colleges and universities. We're going to change that because we understand over here that you can't lead from the back of the pack. I can tell you that our commitment to learning extends far beyond the classroom. We're going to invest in training programs. We're going to offer a tax credit to businesses to help workers upgrade their skills. We're going to double the number of apprenticeships in this province, and we're going to break down those barriers that prevent qualified new Ontarians from entering the workforce.

On this challenge we have before us today, which is to ensure that all Ontarians are at their best, which is the challenge that we have set for ourselves, it just doesn't make any sense, not today, to invite highly skilled and educated people from distant parts of the world to come and move to Ontario and to bring their families here. It doesn't make any sense for us to tell them, "You're going to have to sit this one out. What we'll do is we'll make sure the kids find opportunity. We'll make sure the kids have access to good education. We'll make sure that you all have access to good health care." It doesn't make any sense to say to the parents, not today, not in the knowledge economy, that they're going to have to sit this one out. Understanding that that human capital—which is not the greatest expression in the world—that those skills and that development that has been paid for by taxpayers living in other parts of the world—it doesn't make any sense not to capitalize on that talent and that potential. We will break down every single barrier which stands in the way of getting foreign-trained professionals and tradespeople into the Ontario workforce.

At the end of the day, we need a government which understands that growing an economy requires energy, innovation and a drive to bring in new investment and better jobs.

It would have been nice to hear something in the throne speech about the auto sector, the engine that drives this province's economy, because frankly the government has been missing in action on this file. The auto sector accounts for one in six jobs in this province. This industry is our single greatest productivity champion. No

one makes a quality car more efficiently than Ontario—no one. There are huge successes here on which to build. Just one new assembly plant would create, on average, 1,000 new direct jobs and 7,000 more in parts, steel and support industries. In the last 10 years, the US has landed 19 new assembly plants; we haven't landed a single one, and we're not going to get any as long as the government continues to sit on the sidelines. I can tell you that where I come from, 19-0 is a lousy score.

Our government is going to get off the bench, get into the game and we're going to play to win. We're going to have access to, should we earn the privilege—and we're working as hard as we can to do this. Should we earn the privilege of serving Ontarians as their government, I'm going to use the government plane; I'm going to get Buzz Hargrove into that plane; I'm going to get execs from the auto sector into that plane. We'll go to Detroit, we'll go to wherever we have to go on the face of this planet and, together, we're going to make a compelling, overwhelming argument to the effect that there is no better place in the world to set up a new assembly plant than in our province.

We're not going to sit on our hands. The world is passing our province by while this government says, "Well, we've cut your taxes. What more do you people want?" I can tell you, those truly successful, highly competitive economies are those where they have established a strong partnership with labour, government and business pulling together, and we look forward to doing that.

Now let me tell you about our plan for education; we call it Excellence for All. We believe there is simply no better investment that we can make in our children, in ourselves and in our future than through a quality public education system.

1620

I have come to the conclusion that if we get public education right, if we get it right for all our kids, most of the other things in life will line up very nicely, both for them and for us. They'll get better jobs; we'll get a stronger economy. They'll become better citizens; we'll all get a stronger and more caring society.

Our plan for excellence in public education starts with scrapping this government's handout to private schools. We'll put that money where it belongs: in the public school system.

Our plan includes smaller class sizes, a better curriculum and a revised funding formula along the lines suggested by Rozanski. Right now in Ontario there are good schools—and I mean viable schools that are meeting the educational needs of their students—that are closing in our rural and northern communities because of the flaws in that funding formula. We're going to protect those schools and we're going to fix that formula.

Some studies have come out recently which demonstrate that some of our very best learning takes place in a smaller school environment. That's why in a number of US states now they are taking their larger high schools and even their larger elementary schools and dividing

them into three or four sub-schools. It turns out that in a smaller learning environment, where teachers know the students, know something about your brother and your sister, know something about your parents, know when you're not supposed to be in the hallway, that has a positive impact on the learning environment.

We have also learned that in our smaller schools in rural and northern Ontario, they tend to have a higher school spirit. They tend to have less absenteeism. They tend to have less tardiness. They tend to have more participation in extracurricular activities. They tend to have a better learning environment. So why is it that the government is permitting to have on the books a funding formula that is leading to the extermination of those smaller schools in rural and northern Ontario? We're going to protect those schools.

We're going to keep young people learning until the age of 18, because we know that gives them the best chance at a future that is healthy, prosperous and bright. I know we've all seen 16-year-olds hanging around in malls with nothing to do and nowhere to go. In our vision for the economy, we need everybody at their best, so we're not going to give up on our young people.

It saddens us that half our children are failing Ontario's standardized tests. The real tragedy here is not that children are failing the tests; it's that we have a government that is failing our kids. We're offering a guarantee to the people of Ontario that this situation will not continue. By the end of our first mandate, the number of children passing province-wide tests will have risen to 75%, and we'll be happy to answer to the voters of Ontario for that promise.

That, briefly, is our commitment to education, and we'll stack it up against this government's commitment to cutting education any day of the week.

The next plank in our platform is what we call Growing Strong Communities. That plank starts with our unequivocal commitment to shut down our filthy coal-fired power plants by 2007. Did you know, Mr Speaker, that smog kills 1,900 Ontarians every year? Did you know that childhood asthma has quadrupled in the last 20 years? Did you know that we had a record 27 smog days in Ontario last summer? The government says it would like to shut down those plants by 2015. We say that 2015 is too late, that it's eight years too late. By 2007, we're going to have cleaner air in this province, come hell or high water.

By way of practical experience in these matters, California built 7,500 megawatts of clean energy in one and a half years. Surely in Ontario we can replace 7,500 coal-fired generating watts in four years.

We're going to protect our water by implementing every single recommendation of the Walkerton report, and we're going to crack down on polluters and preserve precious green space in Ontario. We'll tackle urban sprawl and we'll reduce gridlock. We'll also clean up Ontario gasoline and help farmers at the same time. We're going to pass a law in Ontario that says by the year 2007, if you're selling gasoline here, 5% of that has

to be ethanol, and by the year 2010, it's going to have to be 10%.

We have a very strong commitment to our natural environment, and it's not purely motivated by self-interest, because after all a clean and safe environment is for the good of our health. But we feel a strong responsibility to generations yet to come, and in that light, when we consider our air, our water and our green space, we are nothing more than temporary trustees, nothing more than interim guardians. We have a heavy responsibility to protect our natural environment for our children and their children and so many generations of Ontarians yet to come.

Let me talk about health care now: public health care, medicare. For us, medicare gives absolutely wonderful expression to this innate Canadian desire to help people when they're sick, not because of how much money they happen to have in their wallet but just because they're sick.

When I was growing up at home with my brothers and sisters, my mum worked as a nurse pretty well throughout. She worked evening shifts and night shifts. I can recall one time she was working in a psychiatric ward in one of the Ottawa hospitals and she had been physically attacked by one of the patients, who, through no fault of his own, was suffering from a mental illness. She came home and I can recall sitting around with my brothers and sisters, and my mother had bruises. So we said to our mother, "Mum, listen, get another job. We don't need this. You don't need this," and she said, "But my patients are counting on me."

Just recently, we've heard of some of our front-line heroes in this battle against SARS, and I've heard of some families who have said to their mothers, "Don't go to work. It's too dangerous. You could get really sick, Mum." But those nurses said, "Our patients need us." Nurses and doctors and other front-line workers don't think of themselves as heroes. If you ask them, they'll tell you they're just doing their job.

We have a job to do when it comes to health care. Just doing our job today in our party means defending and improving medicare. Our plan—we're calling it The Health Care We Need—starts with an enshrined commitment to medicare. We're going to make it the law. We're going to make Ernie Eves's pay-your-way-to-the-front-of-the-line health care illegal. We're going to shut down his private MRIs and instead we're going to invest in public MRIs. And we're going to bring Ernie Eves's private hospitals into the public system.

We're going to hire 8,000 new nurses in Ontario and we're going to keep them here by giving them the two things they want, need and deserve: respect and full-time work. We won't compare them to Hula Hoop workers and we won't condemn them to part-time and casual work.

1630

I don't know if you know that 50% of Ontario nurses are working part-time, and that is not out of choice; it's because they can't get full-time work. So they're busy

scrambling trying to cobble together a full-time career by taking on two or three jobs at the same time. In this new, frightening world of SARS, we have now come to understand that not only is that not good for nurses who are looking for some stability and predictability in their lives and the continuity that comes with going back to the same patients over and over again, but it is a dangerous thing in an era where we can all contract a virus and take it with us to another hospital setting.

We're also going to increase the number of doctors in Ontario. We're going to train 150 more every single year. We are going to make the practice of family medicine more attractive to doctors and better for families by setting up 150 family health teams right across Ontario. These collaborative teams will be made up of doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, pharmacists and other health care professionals—people working together and combining their skills to deliver quality accessible health care to Ontarians.

We're going to get serious about illness prevention in Ontario. Doctors are telling us that 25% of our children are overweight. They're also telling us that one half of our children are not active enough to achieve optimal growth. At the elementary school level we are going to ban the sale of junk food and make daily physical education mandatory.

I am sad to report that nobody watches more television on the face of the earth than Canadian kids. They are averaging four hours every single day. They're spending 26 hours a week behind a desk during the school year and they're averaging 28 hours in front of a television set. I am not sure, because I don't have the stats yet, as to how much time they are spending in front of a computer. I think that one of the most important things that we can do is impress upon our children in the early years good values when it comes to physical activity and diet, and we intend to do that.

Smoking kills 12,000 Ontarians annually and costs us \$4 billion. The Ontario Medical Association and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario has been asking this government for some time now to ban smoking in public and workplaces. We will do that.

You know, I had the opportunity—the privilege—recently to meet Heather Crowe. Heather Crowe appears on television ads. She comes from the east coast. She started working when she was 17. She has always worked as a waitress. She is 57 now, she is a single mum and she told me she has one year left—she is dying of lung cancer. The remarkable thing is that she's never smoked a single day in her life. We think that we have a responsibility to ensure that when people get up in the morning and go to work to raise their families—whether they are working in a restaurant or a bar as Heather Crowe was, or any other place—they are entitled to a safe, clean and healthy work environment, and we're going to give that to all Ontarians.

The other day when we first came back, last Thursday, and I put some questions to the Premier on the matter of health care, he kept telling me that this government is

spending all kinds of money on health care. Here are the facts: this government cut \$1 billion out of our hospitals; this government shut down 5,700 hospital beds; this government shut down 20 emergency rooms; this government fired 1,000 nurses.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): We're spending \$10 billion more on health care, Dalton.

Mr McGuinty: I'll give you this: you did spend \$400 million on severances for firing thousands of nurses.

Today in Ontario—and I'm sure the minister would also be interested in this—we're second from the bottom in Canada. On a per capita basis we have the second-fewest doctors, the second-fewest nurses, the second-fewest hospital beds. When it comes to funding—and I'm sure the minister will be interested in hearing this too—as a percentage of GDP, nobody invests less in health care in Canada except Alberta. Those are the facts, Minister. You may not like them, but those are the facts.

Hon Mr Sterling: You said we cut health care, and we didn't cut health care.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): Take your seat, please. Order. I don't want to be standing up interrupting the response to the throne speech or the leader of the official opposition, but I'm not going to have this kind of—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Minister. Please continue.

Mr McGuinty: The last of our policy platforms has less to do with what we'll do than how we'll do it.

Our plan, called Government That Works for You, addresses a fundamental problem endemic to politics not only in Ontario but right across Canada. People are losing confidence in politicians and in their institutions of government. There's a lot of cynicism out there, and no government has fed that cynicism more than this government. This government has shut people out. It has turned them off with its autocratic style, and I'm talking about everything from its record-breaking number of debate closures to its insulting, offensive and unconstitutional budget infomercial.

We want to do things differently. We're going to make governments more open and more accountable. We're saying to Ontarians, "The government that we want to form will be your government, not our government. We won't shut you out; we'll invite you in and we'll start by respecting your MPP." We're going to encourage members of this Legislature to represent their constituents instead of blindly toeing the party line. I'm talking about free votes on all matters except for platform commitments and matters of confidence.

We're going to have hearings on all major legislation. We're going to give more power to legislative committees. We're going to require that cabinet ministers attend at least two thirds of question period sessions. We're going to do something about the growing, disturbing influence of money in Ontario politics. In consultation with the public, we're going to set strict

limits on the amount of money that political parties can raise and spend.

We're also going to work to raise voter turnout. In the past 30 years, the percentage of eligible Ontarians casting a vote has dropped from more than 70% to just over 50%. That should tell us all something. Some people I know are feeling that their vote just doesn't count. We're going to consult extensively with Ontarians about whether it's time to rethink our first-past-the-post electoral system. We're going to hold a referendum, giving Ontarians a choice to either keep our first-past-the-post system or to exchange it for another.

We're going to hold elections on fixed dates rather than at the whim of the Premier. Just think of it, Speaker: soon we'll be able to put all of this pre-election nonsense behind us. I'm talking about the TV ads, the reckless, irresponsible promises. We're talking about all those things that people are frankly sick and tired of. It's time to put all of that behind us.

It's time for a change in Ontario. This government had a chance with last week's throne speech to show the people of Ontario that it could change. It had a chance to show the people of Ontario that it had a sense of purpose, a sense of direction. Instead, what they showed Ontarians is that after months of dithering the best they could manage was to tinker a little.

1640

The government of Ernie Eves is out of steam, out of ideas and out of touch. They're offering nothing more to Ontarians than more of the same. We over here on this side of the House can tell you that Ontarians don't want more of the same. They've had enough of the Mike Harris and Ernie Eves experience; they want a new experience. They don't want Ernie Eves's plan for 1995. We need a plan for 2007 and beyond. We need a new approach for a new world—a world that's post-9/11, post-Enron, post-dot-com bubble burst and even post-SARS.

Only our party offers that new approach. We're proud of our province. We want Ontario to live up to its great potential. We just want the best for Ontarians. We want for them the best public schools, the best public health care. We want a safe and clean environment. We want good, high-paying jobs for all our children. We want that to be found inside a healthy, strong and growing economy. And for all of us, we want a strong and caring society. Our plan for change is just what Ontario needs, and we can't wait to get to work for the people of this province.

I move that the address in reply to the speech of His Honour of the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by striking out all of the words after, "We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario," and substitute the following:

"Whereas Ontarians want a real and positive change;

"Whereas Ontarians want a government that will fix the vital public services that we all need while keeping the budget in balance and holding the line on taxes;

“Whereas Ontarians want a government that will cancel the \$3.2-billion tax giveaway to large corporations and put that money toward improved health care, with more doctors and nurses and shorter waiting lists;

“Whereas Ontarians want a government that will cancel the private school tax credit and put that money back into improving our public schools through smaller class sizes;

“Whereas Ontarians want a government that will end taxpayer-funded self-serving partisan advertising and put that money toward improving our water quality monitoring system and improving our air by closing coal-fired plants and mandating cleaner gasoline;

“Whereas the speech from the throne proved that the Eves government has been dithering, continues to support two-tier health care, private school tax credits, giveaways to large corporations, taxpayer-funded self-serving advertising and compromised environmental protection;

“Therefore, this House profoundly regrets that nothing has changed. The Eves government is tired, cynical, out of touch, out of steam and out of ideas, and instead of providing the real and positive change Ontarians demand, are only looking out for themselves and their friends.”

The Acting Speaker: Mr McGuinty has moved that the address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of this session be amended by striking out all the words after, “We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario,” and substitute the following:

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“Whereas the speech from the throne proved that the Eves government has been dithering, continues to support two-tier health care, private school tax credits, giveaways to large corporations, taxpayer-funded self-serving advertising and compromised environmental protection;

“Therefore, this House profoundly regrets that nothing has changed. The Eves government is tired, cynical, out of touch, out of steam and out of ideas, and instead of providing the real and positive change Ontarians demand, are only looking out for themselves and their friends.”

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Chris Stockwell (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): You have read my mind. I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Therefore, this House will now stand adjourned until 6:45 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1647.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)	Should read:
2	38	2	38	to tell all the wonderful people who work at

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
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		York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
		York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
		Mississauga West / -Ouest	Vacant

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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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