



No. 22A

N° 22A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

Fourth Session, 37th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Quatrième session, 37^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 9 June 2003

Lundi 9 juin 2003

Speaker
Honourable Gary Carr

Président
L'honorable Gary Carr

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 9 June 2003

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 9 juin 2003

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RELAY FOR LIFE

Mr Dave Levac (Brant): On Friday, June 6, I was fortunate and honoured to participate in a wonderful and touching event in my riding of Brant that brought over 100 volunteers, 500 participants and corporate and community leaders together to help fight cancer. Relay for Life is an annual event organized by the Cancer Society that raises funds for cancer research and support services for people living with cancer, including their families. Over \$100,000 was raised by 51 teams walking, skipping, running, and in my case crawling around Lions Park track in Brantford for 12 hours, from Friday at 7 pm to 7 am Saturday morning.

There was an opening ceremony called the survivors' lap. Here, 94 cancer survivors did a victory lap to inspire all of us and to show us that cancer can be beaten. To them and their families we say thank you for your courage and determination.

At 10 pm, a very moving and beautiful moment called the "luminaries" took place. Here, candles were lit that circled the track in memory of individuals who have succumbed to cancer. These luminaries kept the darkness away for the rest of the evening. To these individuals and their families, our prayers are with you.

This event was held in ridings across the province. To all organizers, sponsors, participants, volunteers, entertainers, donors, and especially survivors and luminaries' families, we say thank you for a job well done. We know cancer can be beaten.

FEDERAL FIREARMS LEGISLATION

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex): I rise in the House today to applaud the stand taken by the Attorney General to not enforce the ill-fated federal firearms legislation. This is a victory for all Ontarians, and particularly the more than 3,000 law-abiding gun owners in my riding of Lambton-Kent-Middlesex who have written me and made it very clear they oppose this useless waste of more than two billion of their hard-earned tax dollars to implement and enforce an out-of-control program.

It is worth noting that \$2 billion would pay the cost of more than 20,000 front-line police officers who would truly make our streets, our homes and our families safer; \$2 billion would also go a long way to re-establishing Ottawa's fair share of health care funding, assisting Toronto and Ontario in their fight against SARS and funding the 16 SuperBuild infrastructure projects, funded by our government but left stranded by Ottawa, not to mention providing our beleaguered farmers with their fair share of desperately needed safety net programs.

Given that there are now four provinces that have publicly stated they will not enforce this legislation, I am left wondering what it will take for the federal Liberal Party to see the error of their ways. At the very least, I would hope the members opposite would endorse and support the commitment made by this side of the House to oppose this boondoggle which was foolishly and unnecessarily enacted by their federal cousins. Until they do so, I will look forward to hearing the members opposite defend their support of the firearms legislation on the campaign trail.

CONSERVATIVE PLATFORM

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I always find it interesting to hear what respected Conservatives are saying about the Harris-Eves Tories. Take David Crombie, for instance. Crombie is a Tory's Tory. He was mayor of Toronto, he ran for the federal PC leadership and he was a senior cabinet minister under Clark and Mulroney. Here's what David Crombie had to say about Ernie Eves's platform: "This government is more interested in delivering gimmicks than in delivering public policy."

That's what David Crombie said. He was then asked, would he vote for gimmicks in the upcoming provincial election? "No," Crombie said. "Gimmicks are not what we need."

Truer words have rarely been spoken before. Mr Crombie was understandably upset at the Harris-Eves Tories' bullying and betrayal of municipalities. Crombie told it like it is, saying, "In the last five or six years, the provincial government has basically humbled and hobbled municipalities."

Dalton McGuinty will work with municipalities to bring about a real change to improve the lives of people in Ontario. Dalton McGuinty will give two cents per litre of the existing gas tax to municipalities for public transit. Dalton McGuinty will help municipalities put more than 1,000 more police officers on the street. Most import-

antly, Dalton McGuinty's platform is a costed, responsible, realistic plan for change that will improve the lives of Ontarians.

Let Ernie Eves try to sell his gimmicks. Voters can choose real change by choosing Dalton McGuinty.

Now, if I had more time, and I regret I don't, I would like to run through what Bill Davis has had to say about the Harris-Eves platform on education. You can read that yourselves. We'll get a little more time, perhaps, and we can bring you what another Tory says about your government.

MÉLANIE GUILLEMETTE

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): I would like to speak today about a young woman in my riding who evokes the true meaning of community spirit. Mélanie Guillemette, who attends Algonquin in North Bay, will be traveling to the Caribbean islands of Trinidad and Tobago this coming June 19 as part of a group from across this province who will be distributing wheelchairs to people in need on the islands.

Mélanie's journey began four years ago when she and her youth group called Jeunesse-Interact decided to volunteer their free time to do some meaningful community services for those in need. After their teacher and mentor retired, and with no one ready to continue to guide them, these young adults rallied on as a group with their own determination, inspiration and will for helping others within the community.

One of their ongoing missions was to collect enough bottle tabs so they could purchase a wheelchair for someone in need within the community. Eventually, the North Bay Rotary Club took these young adults under their wing and has been kindly guiding and promoting them through the Rotary Club.

Mélanie heard about a World Community Service project that would involve delivering 280 wheelchairs to needy people in and around Trinidad and Tobago. She became very interested and enthusiastic about becoming a participant in this project, so much so that her mother, Joanne, became just as excited and will be joining Mélanie and others from around Ontario in order to personally distribute these much-needed wheelchairs. I would like to salute Mélanie's efforts and determination and wish her continued success in all her endeavours.

VISITORS

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): I'd like all members to welcome the family of a great legislative page, the first page from St Clare Catholic school in the great riding of St Paul's, Kristian Mandarano. His family is here: Anthony, Teresa, Vince and Dominic Mandarano. We all welcome you.

BEST START PLAN FOR CHILDREN

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Today, I had the opportunity

to present the Liberal Best Start plan for children to the social services committee of the city of Toronto.

At this meeting I was appalled to learn that the city of Toronto's crisis with child care is getting worse. The city lost over 1,600 subsidized child care spaces in 2002, in spite of the fact that there are over 15,000 children waiting for a space. This year, provincial funding shortfalls will require Toronto to cut a further 500 spaces, a decision the city wants desperately to avoid.

The Ontario Liberal Party believes that access to quality child care is an important investment for our communities. Dalton McGuinty's Best Start plan for children is a \$300-million plan to expand child care subsidies in Ontario. Under a Liberal government, fully 75% of Ontario families would qualify for assistance with their child care costs.

In addition to our commitment, we will spend every federal dollar from the national child care agenda on regulated child care. Also, we will work co-operatively with our municipal partners to develop a quality child care system and ensure that municipalities like Toronto will no longer have to make the untenable choices brought on by the Ernie Eves government.

1340

CONSTITUENCY STAFF

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton West): As members will know, I will not be returning to this place after the next election; I'm not standing. I want to take this opportunity to thank the staff I have been blessed to have over the years. I want to say very directly to every member who is here for their second term or more that I think they will agree they got re-elected in large part because of the dedication of their staff and the fact that their staff care about their constituents just as much as they do.

I can't name all the staff that I've been fortunate enough to work with, having been a cabinet minister, parliamentary assistant and House leader, but I can mention the staff who are with me now; many of them have been there for almost the entire 13 years.

I would ask this House to join with me in recognizing their contribution and their efforts to my constituents in Hamilton West and formerly in Hamilton Centre. They are: Connie MacKay, Maria Massi, Linda Mitchell and Frances Lima. I want to thank them on behalf of my constituents.

These are the kinds of people who make calls at night when they have their own family responsibilities. They're the ones who go the extra mile so that when you're out on the hustings, people say, "I'm going to vote for you, because I called your office and I got the response I needed."

In large part, while we're here they are the face of the MPP; they are the MPP. I have been blessed with phenomenal support of staff, and I thank you for everything you have done that's allowed me to be here.

MUSIC AND FILM IN MOTION

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): Life can often be difficult for young artists with dreams for the future. This is especially true in northern Ontario, by nature of its being a smaller market in comparison to the big cities of the south and the United States. However, these artists are persistent. Today it is my pleasure to bring to the attention of this House a great organization in northern Ontario that is helping these people reach their dreams.

Music and Film in Motion is a non-profit organization. Its mandate is to promote and develop the north's music and film industries. This year, with the leadership and vision of executive director Dennis Landry, Music and Film in Motion has begun the Northern Ontario Music and Film Awards. These awards will be centred around an awards ceremony in Sudbury, to be held on September 15. The awards will help to give the local industry the publicity and growth that it needs. Anyone who was born in or now lives in northern Ontario is eligible for the honours.

This organization and its ceremony will help focus attention on the excellent talent that our artists have in the north and in all of Ontario. Money and exposure are often barriers to an artist's success. Thanks to Dennis Landry and his co-workers, that barrier is starting to be eliminated. I hope that you all join me in recognizing their hard work and leadership.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): Last week, something extraordinary happened. Bill Davis finally spoke out, and he certainly wasn't bland. Here is what former Premier Davis told the Toronto City Summit Alliance: "I take exception to those who would view public education being, shall we say, fragmented by vouchers or charter schools."

It's clear that Bill Davis, Tory Premier for 14 years, does not like your voucher for private schools. Bill Davis, the man Ernie Eves first ran under, said they fragment public education. Bill Davis, education minister for nine years, made his choice and it's for public education. Here is a man the people of Ontario should be proud of.

The Harris-Eves Tories broke their word and funded private schools. The Harris-Eves Tories took \$500 million out of public schools and put it into private schools. Ernie Eves called the private school tax credit ludicrous, but he flip-flopped and today he supports it.

The differences between Bill Davis and Ernie Eves couldn't be more obvious. Bill Davis has always been totally in support of public education. Ernie Eves is taking \$500 million out of public schools to fund private schools.

Bill Davis stood up to his party and said what he believed. Ernie Eves knuckled under to the most extreme elements of his party and flip-flopped on everything from private schools to jailing the homeless.

Bill Davis commands the respect of Ontario. Ernie Eves—well, let's just say he probably wishes Bill Davis had been just a little bit more bland last week.

CARPENTER HOSPICE IN BURLINGTON

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): The Carpenter Hospice in Burlington is Ontario's newest residential hospice. It was built entirely through the generous contributions of our community. Since opening in August 2002, more than 75 families have been supported by volunteers and staff at the hospice.

There are nine residential hospices in Ontario that have evolved with different and varied funding allocations from the provincial government. The Carpenter Hospice receives a modest envelope of nursing and home care funding through Halton CCAC, while its remaining resources are raised through private donations and fundraising efforts. The Victorian Order of Nurses, through a managed contract with the Halton CCAC, provides limited nursing and home care services, with additional care provided by hospice staff.

On April 14, 2003, I wrote to Health Minister Tony Clement asking for a regulatory change to allow hospice programs to receive direct funding under this long-term-care envelope. The results would be less red tape and more dollars driven to front-line services.

Under the proposal, accountability would still rest with the CCAC and they could continue to set the rate of pay based on salary ranges that they approve locally. The main difference is that the staff would be hired directly by the local hospice, and this would create consistency, stability and reliability for patient-family contact and service delivery.

This model would be very well received by the seven hospices that do not receive direct funding. This change would speak to our government's priority of providing well-managed and enhanced health care services closer to home.

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I beg to inform the House that today I have laid upon the table the report of the Integrity Commissioner concerning his review of expense claims under the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002, for the period January 1, 2003, to March 31, 2003.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CALEDON TEEN RANCH ACT, 2003

Mr Arnott moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr24, An Act respecting the Caledon Teen Ranch.

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

Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

JUNKET REGISTRY ACT, 2003
LOI SUR LE REGISTRE
CONCERNANT LES VOYAGES
AUX FRAIS DE LA PRINCESSE, 2003

Mr Kormos moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 88, An Act to amend the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002, with respect to keeping a registry of travel expense claims / Projet de loi 88, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2003 concernant l'examen des dépenses et l'obligation de rendre compte des ministres et des chefs d'un parti de l'opposition, relativement à l'établissement d'un registre sur les demandes de remboursement pour des frais de déplacement.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): The short title of this act is the Junket Registry Act. It amends the existing legislation to provide that the Integrity Commissioner shall maintain a register of documents regarding expenses and itineraries incurred in the course of out-of-province travel by all members of the Legislative Assembly. The contents of the registry would be published on the Internet. This is part of the junk-the-junkets program. It will expose junkets, junketeers and those who would travel throughout North America and abroad on summer flings, among others, at taxpayers' expense.

1350

CORONERS AMENDMENT ACT, 2003
LOI DE 2003
MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES CORONERS

Mr Hoy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 89, An Act to amend the Coroners Act to require that more inquests be held and that jury recommendations be acted on / Projet de loi 89, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les coroners afin d'exiger qu'un plus grand nombre d'enquêtes soient tenues et que les recommandations du jury soient appliquées.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): This bill amends the Coroners Act so that all deaths on highways, in schools, universities, colleges or hospitals are reported to the coroner. The coroner shall investigate all such deaths and the coroner is obliged to hold an inquest into a death unless he or she is satisfied that the death was due to natural causes and was not preventable.

The chief coroner is required to forward jury recommendations to the person or entity to which they are

directed. If the recommendations are directed to a public sector entity, the entity shall implement them if the recommendations deal with matters of public safety. If the public sector entity fails to implement the recommendations, it shall report on the reasons for the failure to the chief coroner within one year after the recommendations are made.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT
ACT (SCHOOL BUSES), 2003

LOI DE 2003 MODIFIANT LE CODE
DE LA ROUTE (AUTOBUS SCOLAIRES)

Mr Parsons moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 90, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to require that school buses be equipped with flashing orange caution lights / Projet de loi 90, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour exiger que les autobus scolaires soient équipés de feux d'avertissement orange clignotants.

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

The member for a short statement?

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): This bill amends the Highway Traffic Act to require that school buses be equipped with flashing orange caution lights that warn drivers when the bus is preparing to stop. This requirement applies to new school buses that are put on the road for the first time on or after the day the bill receives royal assent.

VISITORS

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to welcome grades 6, 7 and 8 French immersion students from D'Arcy McGee and their teachers Ms Galecka, Mr Ferrari and Mrs Rashotte. Welcome to Queen's Park.

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? I'm afraid I heard a no.

Other motions? Back to the government House leader.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I'll say it slower.

Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mr Stockwell: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 96(g), notice for ballot item 13 be waived. That would be Mr Bradley's bill.

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

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

JUNO BEACH CENTRE

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): It's my pleasure today to speak to a matter that is close to my heart and the hearts of many Ontarians—and Canadians, for that matter.

We all know of the courage and bravery of Canadian veterans of the Second World War, and we all understand that their contributions to peace, freedom and democracy must always be remembered. The government of Ontario is committed to ensuring that future generations know of the valour shown by our veterans, hear of their stories, and understand the great debt that our society owes to them. I am honoured to have participated in the opening last Friday of the new Juno Beach Centre in Normandy, the very place where Canadian soldiers landed on D-Day, 59 years ago.

On September 10, 1939, Canadians went to war to preserve the freedoms that we all hold dear. By the time the Second World War had ended, more than 45,000 Canadians would sacrifice their lives for our freedom and another 55,000 would be wounded defending it. In the long, hard struggle to defend the ideals of the free world, the tide began to turn one fateful and famous day: D-Day, June 6, 1944. As the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces, General Eisenhower, told the Allied soldiers, "The eyes of the world are upon you. The hope and progress of liberty-loving people everywhere marches with you. I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full victory."

Before dawn that morning, over 100 ships of the Royal Canadian Navy manned by 10,000 Canadian sailors steamed toward that very coast. Overhead, streams of Canadian bombers dropped thousands of tons of explosives on enemy defences. Canadian fighter pilots battled the enemy in the overcast skies. Then, at just past 8 am, over 21,000 Canadian soldiers stormed the beach that had been code-named Juno. Ahead of them lay kilometres of enemy machine-gun emplacements, concrete forts and barbed wire.

That day 340 Canadians gave their lives. Another 574 were wounded and 47 were taken prisoner. But by the end of the day, the Canadians had pushed through enemy lines, advancing farther than either the British or the American forces. They fought on, despite heavy enemy fire, destruction all around them, the death of their friends and allies, and often in spite of their own wounds.

That courage is something that few, if any, of us can begin to fathom. The soldiers, sailors and airmen who fought on D-Day didn't set out to be heroes. They were simply ordinary young men from all over Canada, many of them from the province of Ontario. By the end of the day, however, they had become heroes, immortalized in the eyes of Canadians and the entire free world. If Vimy Ridge was where Canada was baptized as a nation, surely Juno Beach marked our passage into adulthood. It was a day when we stood shoulder to shoulder with Britain and the United States as one of the world's pre-eminent powers of peace, justice and freedom.

For almost 60 years we have benefited from the peace and freedom that these soldiers earned with their sweat, bought with their blood, and many paid for with their lives.

Last week I was pleased to announce that in addition to supporting the Juno Beach Centre, the government is also creating a veterans' memorial on the grounds of the Legislature.

1400

We must always remember these courageous young soldiers. We must remember their spirit of camaraderie, their heroism, the lives and the families they left behind to serve freedom. We must pass these stories on to the generations that follow. We must ensure that our children and grandchildren know that democracy, freedom and justice are not just ideals to live by, but principles to fight for. We must teach them that not only do we owe our veterans our thanks, but we owe it to them to respect those principles in our daily lives. We must remember each and every day that our many decades of freedom and peace have come at a huge cost in human life and suffering.

There can be no doubt that time has taken its toll. The young men and women who went off to war are fewer and fewer each year. On behalf of the province of Ontario, I want to thank these veterans. Thank you for having the courage to make a difference, to pass the torch, to defend our freedoms and to preserve our peace. These veterans are true heroes in every sense of the word. I salute them; the people of Ontario salute them; Canadians and free people everywhere salute them.

Ontario is honoured to participate in the Juno Beach Centre. It is a fitting tribute and a permanent reminder that good triumphs over evil, justice prevails over tyranny and God almighty watches over the spirit of human decency everywhere. A Canadian, Padre Hickey, witness to the battle at Juno Beach, said, "The wheat field that once bent like any other wheat field back home, now is torn with shell holes, and everywhere you could see the pale, upturned faces of the dead. We dug narrow graves and lowered them to rest. I blessed the group of graves and said the burial prayers. I often thought that somewhere a mother, a father, a wife, a sister or brother still hoped and prayed."

In closing, let us never forget the ultimate price paid for our freedoms and beliefs that, unfortunately, we sometimes take for granted. Let us thank each and every

one of our veterans for helping to light the flame of the human spirit in each and every one of us so that future generations may live with dignity in freedom and in peace.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I want to begin by thanking the Premier for his statement. I appreciate the opportunity to respond today on behalf of our caucus.

Every day, we Canadians do something simple but yet profound: we choose. We choose what we'll wear, where we'll go and how we'll get there. We choose our friends, our place of work and our place our worship, if we do in fact choose to worship at all. We choose what we'll say, whether that be about the weather, the news or those who govern us. And from time to time we choose those governments through free elections. We are free to choose because of the choice made by young men and women some 60 years ago. They could have chosen to ignore the travesty and atrocities occurring an ocean away. Instead, they crossed that ocean, landing eventually on a beach in Normandy. They chose to confront and ultimately defeat those who sought to impose dictatorship where there had been democracy, fear where there had been hope and coercion, even death, where there had been choice. By so doing, these young Canadian soldiers traversed another ocean, one that separates good and evil.

Twenty-one thousand Canadians fought their way ashore at Normandy, and with each courageous step they secured the freedom to choose that we enjoy today.

On behalf of our caucus, I want to express my thanks to those Canadians—those with us and those who have passed on—and their families. I thank them also on behalf of my children and all of our children, who have known nothing but the freedom to choose because of the choice these soldiers made some 60 years ago.

I want to commend, on behalf of our caucus and our party, everyone, including the government, associated with the opening of the Juno Beach Centre commemorating Canada's role in the D-Day landings.

I am proud to be leader of my party, but perhaps my most important job was one I held when I was just a young man myself. Between high school and university, I took some time to work as an orderly in the veterans' hospital in Ottawa. I provided basic hands-on care to war veterans. I bathed them and shaved them and combed their hair and brushed their teeth. I turned them from side to side. I learned how to treat bedsores. I sat at their bedside and often listened to their stories. I can tell you they showed the same courage in the twilight of their years as they had shown at dawn in Normandy decades earlier, the same kind of courage the Premier himself referred to, that few of us can even begin to fathom in today's world.

Let us honour that courage with ceremony and memorials, with brick and mortar. But let us honour it as well in another way, with each choice we make as individuals, as Ontarians and as Canadians. Let us choose wisely and bravely as well. Let's choose to never take for granted the freedom to choose and those who fought for it and

died for it on our behalf and on our children's behalf. Let us choose to never forget those brave young Canadians.

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I am pleased to be able to take part in this act of remembrance today for a number of reasons. The Premier and the leader of the Liberal Party have referred to the number of Canadians who took part in D-Day: the airmen who flew above the beaches; the sailors who took many soldiers to the Normandy beaches; even the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion, which, although it hasn't received the publicity of some other airborne operations, certainly was very distinguished on that day; and then all of those Canadian soldiers who landed on the beaches—the Regina Rifles, the Royal Winnipeg Rifles, the Queen's Own Rifles, the North Shore Regiment, the Fort Garry Horse, the 1st Hussars.

The first time I visited Normandy, I was a 20-year-old university student. I must confess, I knew some of the history of the Second World War, but not a lot. What struck me at that time was that there were museums along Normandy. Yes, there were remembrances to British soldiers, to American soldiers, but there were really only a couple of plaques which acknowledged that so many Canadians had been part of that memorable day and so many Canadians had given their lives. So I think what happened just a few short days ago, the opening of the Juno Beach memorial, is long, long overdue, is something that every one of us should feel some sense of pride in and some sense of, finally, their recognition.

1410

I also want to say something personal. When you're a young boy growing up, you probably don't spend a lot of time thinking about these things. When I was just a student in high school, oftentimes hockey practice would be late in the evening, and I can't say how many times a fellow called Joe McKelvie, who used to work late in the evening at the paper mill—he was always getting called in because he was a machinist, and whenever something went down he had to fix it—used to give me a ride home. I'd be hitchhiking home from hockey practice at 9 o'clock at night and he'd pick me up.

I learned later on in life that Joe McKelvie was one of the people who had gone ashore with the Queen's Own Rifles that day. He was somebody I always saw at Remembrance Day ceremonies, always very proud, always dressed in his uniform—very proud of what he had accomplished and what other people had accomplished.

I wonder what someone like Joe McKelvie would feel today if he knew this was finally happening. Regrettably he is one of those who has passed away—he passed away last summer—but he knew this memorial was being built, and he used to tell everyone how proud he was of it.

I hope the families of those people who gave so much—the children, the grandchildren—will feel equally proud. I hope all citizens of Ontario and all Canadians will recognize what an incredible act this is and how important it is.

Whenever I think about these issues, I'm always drawn to a book that Desmond Morton and Jack

Granatstein wrote. It's called *A Nation Forged in Fire: Canadians and the Second World War*. There's a quotation in it that I think summarizes better than anything I have ever read the nature of the people who were there. They quote a member of the Belgian Resistance named Gerard Adriaenssens, who every November 1 takes part in a remembrance ceremony for Canadian soldiers. He was just a boy at the time, but this is what he remembers. Some Canadian soldiers spent the night in their barn, and he said:

"They were not Rambo soldiers, as one now imagines, but rather quiet, simple boys with a dull look in their eyes, who mourned their comrades who fell that day. They sat there quietly and knew that it might be their turn to offer their lives the next day so that we here in Europe might live in freedom, friendship and peace.

"This is what we must tell the youth: the sacrifice these young Canadian soldiers freely gave for us ... they will always be remembered."

I believe, now that the Juno Beach memorial is there, not just for Canadians to see but for the world to see, they indeed will always be remembered. On behalf of New Democrats, not only here at Queen's Park but across Ontario, we will remember them and we are very proud of them and the sacrifice they made.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition):

My questions today are to the Premier. Today nurses came to the Legislature with a very simple message to you: they want a full, independent public inquiry to look into how we handled SARS in Ontario. They want the assurance that all the tough questions will be asked and answered through a full, independent, objective process conducted by an individual who is entirely removed from the government and who is equipped with all the tools necessary to get the job done: ask those questions, get those answers and provide all of us with the benefit of a road map so we can manage these things in the best way possible in the future.

Premier, my question to you is, why are you afraid to call for a full, independent public inquiry on the matter of SARS in Ontario?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): The reality is that we're not, and the reality is that we are right now talking to an individual of exactly that stature and asking for their input to the terms of reference of a full, open and public process so that the people of Ontario can understand exactly what happens in their health care system.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, I'm not sure what you're talking about, but I'll tell you what nurses are asking for and what I think we owe not only those nurses but all

Ontarians. A real public inquiry comes with whistleblower protection; your internal review does not. A real public inquiry comes with the power to compel testimony; your internal review does not. A real public inquiry comes with the power to subpoena files; your internal review does not. A real public inquiry is conducted in public and is truly independent; your internal review is not.

If you are telling me that those are the characteristics that are to be found in what you're proposing to do, then you and I are talking about the same thing, and we can get on with the public's business of having a full, independent public inquiry. If you're not prepared to do that, then tell us why you are afraid to do so.

Hon Mr Eves: Perhaps the leader of the official opposition is confused. There is a review going on, headed by Dr Walker, of the public health care system's ability to respond to other situations like SARS in the future and to look at the SARS experience to develop proper procedures as we go forward.

That is not what we are talking about here. We are talking about coming out of a meeting that I held last week in my office with various representatives of health care professions and institutions in Ontario, having a full, open, public investigative process to look into what is going on, what has gone on in the health care system, and exactly how our health care system has the ability to respond.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-St Clair): —weasel words.

Hon Mr Eves: I say to the honourable member from Windsor, if you want to refer to the individual who we are considering as a weasel, do that outside the House when he or she is appointed.

I find it absolutely despicable that the leader of the official opposition or any other member of this Legislature would stand up in this House and try to make a political issue out of what is a very public health care system in this province. You might want to wait until you see who the individual is, what the process is and what the terms of reference are before you start to criticize them, because you might be very embarrassed in very short order.

Mr McGuinty: I'm still trying to figure out why you are afraid to agree to a full, independent public inquiry. As to the politics, I'm trying to take the politics out of this. I'm trying to take it away from you and me and put it in the hands of an independent, objective commissioner who will get the job done. That's what we did in the matter of Walkerton. What we're talking about here is the same kind of process that was used subsequent to the Walkerton inquiry. I think that process served the people of Ontario very, very well. I think it was very effective at taking you, me and the leader of the third party out of the picture and having the matter given justice by an independent, objective commissioner.

Here are the questions: Why are you afraid of real whistleblower protection? Why are you afraid of the power to compel testimony? Why are you afraid of the

power to subpoena files? Why are you afraid to have an inquiry that is full, independent and conducted in the face of the public? Why are you afraid of all those things?

Hon Mr Eves: Who said that there wouldn't be protection of people who appear? Who said that it wouldn't be a public process? Who is making this stuff up? Who is playing politics with people's lives?

You should be ashamed of yourself, standing up here, trying to score political points. We are trying to share information in the Ontario public health care system with the public, not score political points, which is more than I can say for you. You should be ashamed of yourself for standing up in the House.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): New question.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. We'll give the opposition leader time. The leader of the official opposition has the floor.

1420

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I have a second question to the Premier. I want to return to the matter of the Ontario pension fund in that very unusual deal that was entered into with the single biggest contributor to your party. Let's go over the basic facts here.

Your party's biggest fundraiser lent your party's biggest donor millions of pension fund dollars. The deal is very unusual, both from an industry perspective and from the perspective of the Ontario pension fund itself. It is so unusual that the Ontario pension fund has never entered into this kind of deal since or before. We also learned last week that Mr Weiss for nine months was working both as a fundraiser for your party and as a member of the board of the Ontario pension fund. Fundamentally, this comes down to your leadership, your ethical standards, those that you set for yourself and your government.

I'm asking you, Premier, now that you fully understand those facts, if you believe there is nothing wrong there, that there was no conflict, and you feel it is fine for that to have happened on your watch.

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I believe the Chair of Management Board has looked into this matter and has an answer to this question.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): I guess I could refer continuously to the Hansards of last week as well. I will tell you the same thing as I've said on numerous occasions: what we're concerned with here is whether or not due process was followed and whether or not due diligence was followed, and we're satisfied that that's the case.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, back to you. Ultimately, this is about your ethical standards. These cabinet ministers are responding to nothing more than the standards that you set for yourself and your government. I want to make

it clear at the outset that these are not our standards. We would not allow this kind of thing to happen under our government. Maybe this Premier feels this is OK, but we think it is wrong.

Premier, once more: your party's biggest fundraiser lends your party's biggest donor millions in pension fund dollars. The deal is very unusual for the Ontario pension fund itself and it is very unusual given industry standards for pension funds in this province. It is so unusual that the Ontario pension fund has never done this kind of deal before, nor has it done this kind of deal since. Mr Weiss was appointed to this position by your government. For nine months he acted in two capacities: both as fundraiser and as an individual on the board of the Ontario pension fund.

Here's another fact for you to consider today, Premier. We have learned that during that nine-month period in which Mr Weiss had a foot in both camps, \$21,300 was contributed by Mr Cortellucci's companies to your party. I ask you again, Premier: given that this has everything to do with your ethical standards and the standards you set for your government, do you see nothing at all wrong in these facts?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The Leader of the Opposition is reaching a little bit here. First of all, for him to connect dots, there have to be some dots for him to connect.

Let's deal with the so-called unusual nature of these types of investments. As I reported last week, if we look at the industry standards, they were reported in Benefits Canada's report: of the top 100 pension funds in Canada, 1.7% of total assets are invested in mortgages for pension funds. In the case of the Ontario pension fund, this represents 0.3% of investments in mortgages, which is \$36.3 million. Clearly, in contrast with what the Leader of the Opposition is saying, the industry standards for investment in mortgages are much higher than for the Ontario pension plan.

You deal with facts. He hasn't listened to what I said last week. Obviously I'm giving the same facts today. Hopefully he doesn't return to the same thing again tomorrow. But these are facts reported by Benefits Canada.

Mr McGuinty: Premier, you can duck, you can bob, you can weave, but this is sticking to you. It's not a matter for the minister. This is ultimately a matter for you. This is a very, very unusual deal. This deal stinks. It's like an odour in an elevator: it's just not going to go away. It's going to hang around for a long time, and we'll keep bringing it back to you, because that's where the buck stops.

It is my understanding that you were going to provide strong leadership over there; you were going to set high standards; you were going to do things differently from your predecessor. Then tell us, Premier, what you intend to do about this deal. Are you going to allow this deal to stand? Are you going to say, "It is fine. This may have happened on my watch. We've appointed this guy. He was our biggest fundraiser. He may have received money from our biggest donor. This may be an exceptional deal, but as far as I'm concerned as Premier of Ontario, as

leader of this new government, there is not a damn thing wrong with this”?

Is that what you're telling us, Premier? Because if that is what you're telling us, I want to make it clear we have nothing to do with those standards. If you're such a strong leader, then stand up and say, “I will set this aside. I will not allow this to happen.”

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I am trying to deal with facts here. It's unfortunate the Leader of the Opposition hasn't listened to the facts as stated last week, and he still seems to want to try to smear people. I would suggest you either listen to the facts or go out and speak as you think the facts are outside of the House and see how long you stand on your kind of facts when you try to smear people.

I get back to the facts. The fact of the matter is that the Ontario Pension Board has always had the power to invest in real estate mortgages. The authority to make these mortgage investments—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Come to order, please. Sorry to interrupt. Chair of Management Board.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Getting back to the facts, the authority to make these mortgage investments has existed unchanged since 1991. The board adopted an investment policy containing these elements in the Statement of Investment Policies and Goals in 1991. Clearly the authority was there to make these investments.

All I hear over there are all these spurious accusations. I would suggest that if the members of the opposition believe that these are true facts, they don't go under the protection of the Legislature there. Go out and make these facts, as you state them, outside there and see how long you stand on them.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Today, parents in Toronto are terrified that their children are not safe at school. A month ago we saw the terrible death of Holly Jones. We've heard reports of a man trying to abduct children on the street. Most recently, an intruder was found in Essex-Hawthorne public school trying to make contact with children.

Premier, your government has cut education funding. You've eliminated school principals and vice-principals. You've eliminated education assistants, caretakers, secretaries. We are told that these people are the eyes and ears in our schools. We're told that these people who have been cut in fact are needed to keep our children safe. Are you going to put more children at risk, or are you going to do something about these cuts which take these essential people out of our schools?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Surely the leader of the third party is not suggesting that the government or anything this government has done led to the very unfortunate death of Holly Jones. Surely he is above that on the floor of this Legislature.

Contrary to what he would like people to believe, the government has not cut funding to education in this province. As a matter of fact, we have added considerably to funding in this province. It is now \$15.3 billion a year—when we started, it was \$12.9 billion a year—and we have committed to adding to that another \$1.9 billion in excess of what Dr Rozanski recommended in his report. So in his supplementary, he might want to correct the record on that issue, and he might want to remove any suggestion that the government is somehow responsible for the very unfortunate death and murder of Holly Jones. Surely he has the class to do that.

1430

Mr Hampton: Here is the reality: principals have been cut, vice-principals have been cut, caretaking staff have been cut and educational assistants have been cut, and now the Conservative-appointed supervisor, Paul Christie, wants to cut even more from those schools, the very school where the intruder was found. Lunchtime supervisors are supposed to disappear, more vice-principals are supposed to be cut and more caretakers are supposed to be cut.

Premier, I have two school-aged children. Like those other parents, I'm worried about what's going on when someone who is obviously trying to make contact with children can get into a school, and yet we know more cuts are scheduled. Are you going to put more children at risk, or are you going to recognize that the cuts you are proposing—the cuts Paul Christie wants to make in these very schools—will put more children at risk?

Hon Mr Eves: There have been no cuts to education in the province of Ontario; there have been billions of dollars added to education in the province of Ontario. With respect to the safety of schools, I think every member of this House would agree that schools should be as safe as possible. That's why our government introduced the Safe Schools Act. We're looking at ways to improve safety in our public education system all the time.

I say again to the honourable member that he might want to clarify that he's surely not suggesting that anything the government has done led to the very unfortunate death of Holly Jones.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Final supplementary?

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): I talked to the mother whose child was approached by an intruder at Essex-Hawthorne public school. She's very distressed, and I know you understand that. I am distressed.

I am telling you that the cuts to education are not going by unnoticed by me, by this parent or by Dr Rozanski. Premier, you control the purse strings, not the board. The board spends according to what you give them. So you have made the cuts that are making it very difficult in our schools to have people such as educational assistants, caretakers, secretaries and vice-principals as the eyes and ears of school safety. You have to do more to reduce the threat and increase the safety of our children as much as you can. Responsible parents do not leave their children unattended; neither should you.

Tell this mother what you are going to do, Premier, to improve the safety of her child and every schoolchild in Ontario.

Hon Mr Eves: This is surely an all-time new low for members of the third party in this Legislature. Last year, the Toronto District School Board received \$60 million more than it received the year before. The proposed spending for this year is \$99 million more than last year. This year it is proposed that it will receive \$2.1 billion, a 5% increase over last year, which was an increase over the previous year, despite the fact that its enrolment declined by 4.2%.

To stand up in this House and say to the only government that's done something about safety in schools in the last 15 years in this province, and that has increased public school funding, including in Toronto, by billions of dollars since we've been the government, and try to leave the impression that somehow that resulted in the unfortunate murder and death of Holly Jones going home from a friend's house, is absolutely despicable. You might want to have the class to stand up and withdraw that ridiculous accusation on the floor of this Legislature, and you might want to go out there and repeat it.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): I have a question for the Premier.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Sorry. We'll start over. Come to order, please. The leader of the third party has the floor.

Mr Hampton: I believe that your cuts to education, particularly in Toronto, are putting children's safety at risk. But I want to ask you about a situation with nurses. Nurses today took the incredibly unusual step of coming here to Queen's Park wearing masks that say "Muzzled" on them and asking your government for a public inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act with whistle-blower protection so that nurses can tell the public the facts as they know them.

Premier, you have said you want to have a review. Nurses have said that is not good enough. Nurses want a public inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act, and they want whistle-blower protection so that those nurses who have been muzzled, who have been ignored and who have been silenced can come forward and tell the public the facts about SARS as they know them. Will you provide a public inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act with whistle-blower protection so those nurses can tell the public their facts? Yes or no?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I say to the leader of the third party that when he sees what sort of a public process, investigative process, we come forward with, he will see that people of all health care professions will be free to come forward and tell their story and will receive the protection they all deserve so that the people of Ontario can hear for

themselves what has happened in their health care system with respect to SARS in the province.

Surely the honourable member is not suggesting that somebody is guilty of some criminal activity with respect to the SARS outbreak in Ontario. What we want to do is to get the facts of how this SARS outbreak was treated and contained in the province, how information was shared under among different health care professions and institutions, and how we can do a better job in the future.

Mr Hampton: It is the very front-line nurses who have no confidence in the process you've outlined. It is the very front-line nurses, for example at Mount Sinai, who asked for protective equipment like these masks and were denied. It's the very front-line nurses who are saying that all of the procedures that need to be in place in terms of patient transfers are not in place. They don't have confidence in the process you have outlined so far. These are the nurses, many of whom are sick, many of whom are risking their lives, who are saying they do not have confidence in the process that you have outlined so far.

The question is, are you going to provide them with a public inquiry under the Public Inquiries Act with whistle-blower protection or not? That's what they want to know, and what you've outlined so far gives them no confidence. What's your answer?

Hon Mr Eves: If the leader of the third party was at the meeting last week, he will know I tried to convey to the House last week exactly—

Mr Hampton: —nurses on the front line. They were at the meeting.

Hon Mr Eves: He's talking about one group that was at the meeting. The Registered Nurses Association of Ontario was there. The Ontario Nurses' Association was there. The Ontario College of Nurses was there. The Ontario Medical Association was there. The College of Physicians and Surgeons was there. The Ontario Hospital Association was there. I say to the honourable member that they all agree that there should be a public process, that people in all health care professions should be free to come forward and talk about their experiences and the sharing, or lack thereof, with respect to SARS and how it was dealt with so that we can inform the public of Ontario as to exactly what went on with their health care system.

1440

The RNAO was the only member in attendance who wanted to use the language of a public inquiry similar to Walkerton. The others, quite frankly, basically felt—

Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): They weren't asked.

Hon Mr Eves: I say, with all due respect to the honourable member, you are incorrect. They were all asked to say whatever they wanted to say on this issue—

The Speaker: I'm afraid the Premier's time is up.

MINISTER'S EXPENSES

Mr Michael Bryant (St Paul's): My question is for the Premier. It's also to do with standards. Premier, do

you think it's OK for one of your ministers to have a \$5,000-\$10,000 expense picked up, not by his ministry, but rather by a taxpayer-owned corporation? Do you think that's OK?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): If the honourable member is referring to the expense of the Minister of the Environment, he will know that the Minister of the Environment has done the appropriate thing and referred the entire issue to the Integrity Commissioner, who will give a totally independent and proper ruling on the issue.

Mr Bryant: Well, the Premier will know that the government sets the standards and the rules upon which the Integrity Commissioner adjudicates, and you will know that your bill that purported to cover off ministerial travel expenses, Bill 216, was supposed to fix all the loopholes. That's what the minister responsible said. He said, "The rules governing expenses have long been vague and inconsistently applied," and therefore the ministerial expenses involving travel were to be covered under Bill 216.

I say to you, Mr Premier, there's a huge honking loophole in this bill that you introduced. The Integrity Commissioner will be speaking to one bill, the Members' Integrity Act, and it's very convenient that the member wants him to look at that, but what I'm asking you to speak to is the bill that you introduced: the law that governs ministerial expenses. We cannot have public expenses diverted from public attention by having them picked up by taxpayer-owned corporations that are not subject to public disclosure.

Will you or will you not fill the loophole that permits the Minister of Energy to be a chauffeur of a limo paid for by Ontario Power Generation?

Hon Mr Eves: We introduced legislation that is far more restrictive and definite than any previous government in the history of the province of Ontario, which is more than I can say for your party when they were in government, I might add. You might want to stand up in this House and explain what happened when you were in government for five years, and you might want to go through it.

The reality is that there is an independent Integrity Commissioner. Surely the member's not questioning the integrity of the Integrity Commissioner, Mr Justice Coulter Osborne. Surely you can rely upon the opinion and the honesty and the independence of Mr Justice Osborne to give us a fair, independent and objective non-political review of the minister's expenses. We're prepared to do that. Why aren't you?

PROVINCIAL PARKS

Mr Bert Johnson (Perth-Middlesex): My question today is for the Honourable Jerry Ouellette, the hard-working, effective, efficient Minister of Natural Resources who represents the riding of Oshawa. Minister, I, like you—

Interjections.

Mr Johnson: Maybe the member for Toronto Centre-Rosedale would like to listen—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): Order. Take his seat. The member for Perth-Middlesex has the floor. Sorry to the member.

Mr Johnson: Minister, I, like you, and thousands of other Ontarians get very excited at this time of year. The weather is getting warmer and we feel the urge to get outside and enjoy the wilderness.

I, myself, satisfy this urge with an annual fishing trip. Many people like to camp, hike, canoe or simply head out to one of many provincial parks for a picnic.

However people use them, we have a world-class provincial park system right here in our own backyard. Minister, could you please inform us today on the status of our parks, and what kind of season 2003 is shaping up to be.

Hon Jerry J. Ouellette (Minister of Natural Resources): I thank the member for the question. All our parks, in every region of the province, are up and running and fully ready to go. We have 292 parks fully operational in the province of Ontario. Quite frankly, during this time of concern with what's taking place with tourism in the province, it's good to report that we have people from all around the world visiting our parks. This is the second year in a row that we are breaking records for reservations because people want to come to Ontario and participate in our great parks system.

Mr Johnson: It's a little bit off topic, Mr Speaker, but I just wanted to introduce Lutzen Riedstra and his son, Lutzen, in the members' east gallery. They are visiting from the Stratford archives, and we welcome them to the Legislature today. They like parks and things like that as well.

Minister, I must say that with the concerns about tourism, the impact of SARS on this huge industry, and other solemn concerns like mad cow disease, it is really great news to hear about our parks system and the way it is being utilized. That being said, how should people from my great riding of Perth-Middlesex or elsewhere go about getting their own campsite and what can they expect when they arrive there for their holiday?

Hon Mr Ouellette: There's a wide choice of activities that take place in all our parks, from swimming to hiking to canoeing. Whether it's Darlington, Ivanhoe, Silent Lake, or Algonquin and its 110th anniversary, there are all sorts of different activities for all sorts of people across the province.

The question was about getting on-line. OntarioParks.com is one of the ways that you can make your reservation in Ontario parks. Whether it's bringing your own trailers or tents, we've got electricity in them to provide a wide range of activities for all those individuals, both in Ontario and those visiting our great province.

EDUCATION TAX CREDIT

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. Last week I was at the

Toronto City Summit Alliance conference and I had the very good fortune to sit on a panel dealing with the matter of education, a panel that was moderated by former Premier Bill Davis.

You will know that Bill Davis spent most of his adult life championing and building a strong, sound system of public education in Ontario. He was very critical of your private school tax credit. He said, "I take exception to those who would view public education being, shall we say, fragmented by vouchers or charter schools."

Premier, you were a member in the Bill Davis government. Surely you must recall his passion for public education and the vision with which he inspired all of us when it came to that important ministry. Can you tell us, why is it that you have betrayed Bill Davis's vision for public education in the province of Ontario?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): There is no length to which the leader of the official opposition won't stoop today to try and leave misimpressions with the public. Bill Davis spoke about vouchers and charter schools. There is nothing that this government is doing that takes away from public education in Ontario.

We are spending billions more than David Peterson ever dreamt of spending on public education in Ontario. We have increased funding to public education dramatically, and we will continue to do it as we go forward in the future.

Mr McGuinty: I can tell you, Premier, I was there: he was talking about your tax credit. He was about 15 feet away from me. He was talking about your tax credit and he was very, very critical. This is a man who spent nine years as Minister of Education and 14 years as Premier. This man stands against your tax credit. This is the same tax credit that you yourself called ludicrous. You've abandoned the principles that he had set for Tories in the province and you abandoned your own principles when you decided that a tax credit that you yourself called ludicrous was somehow worthy of your support.

I ask you again, Premier: why is it that you have abandoned traditional Conservative Party principles when it comes to championing public education for all our children?

1450

Hon Mr Eves: That is not what Premier Davis was talking about, and the leader of the official opposition knows it. He was talking about vouchers and charter schools. That is not what former Premier Bill Davis says when he's talking to us about what his comments were and weren't.

I know you would like to exaggerate and use it to your political advantage, but that is not—

Mr McGuinty: He's against the tax credit. Phone him up and ask him.

Hon Mr Eves: We did, and that is not what he was talking about, and the leader of the official opposition knows it.

I will agree with him on this point: Bill Davis was one of the best education ministers Ontario has ever had, certainly far superior to anybody who was Minister of

Education in the Liberal regime of David Peterson. He was right up there with the current Minister of Education, Elizabeth Witmer.

ASSISTANCE TO TOURISM INDUSTRY

Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka): My question today is for the Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Brian Coburn. My beautiful riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka has been hit hard by the threat of SARS. The health unit and health care professionals have been doing an exemplary job in managing the situation, and for that they should be commended. However, as you know, our tourism industry has taken quite a hit. Can you tell me what support my riding can expect from our government?

Hon Brian Coburn (Minister of Tourism and Recreation): I thank the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka. Certainly his dedication and commitment to his residents puts him at the forefront in terms of accessing some of the ministry's programs.

We recognize that some of the health care challenges we have are not only in Toronto but throughout other parts of Ontario. That's why, on April 29, Premier Eves announced \$128 million as part of a recovery program for tourism in the province. Part of that recovery plan is the destination marketing partnership fund. That of course supports the destination marketing efforts we have in different areas of Ontario. The goal of the fund is to stimulate increased visitation by new visitors and re-energize and revitalize our communities to increase community confidence and spending.

This fund is certainly targeted to your riding as well, and the Georgian Bay marketing association would be able to apply for that funding. This helps to do things such as advertising, marketing, public relations activities and direct mail.

Another important initiative is—

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): I'm afraid the time is up. Supplementary?

Mr Miller: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. Our government certainly has stepped up to the plate to assist the tourism industry as a result of our recent challenges. I know the tax holiday, which has been put in place from, I believe, May 1 to September 30, will certainly help to stimulate business activity in the area.

Knowing that the Georgian Bay marketing association and Muskoka tourism can be assisted, what kind of help can individual operators expect in promoting their area and their events?

Hon Mr Coburn: We believe that greater recovery from SARS can be achieved through co-operation between tourism and marketing associations, individual businesses, community groups and municipal tourism organizations. That's why our funding programs are targeted at building these partnerships and strengthening them to achieve a greater impact in our communities from marketing efforts.

The member may also like to know that we have the event marketing and development fund as well, and that

encourages partnerships to increase attendance by new visitors and helps generate more economic activity. This fund also targets events or festivals and provides support in marketing efforts with the goal of improving long-term sustainability.

Event and festival organizations or strategic alliances between individuals and businesses, community organizations and others will have access to funds from these marketing efforts.

HYDRO DEREGULATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Statistics Canada says that industries in Ontario now pay 75% more for deregulated hydro. Too many industries can't afford that. They're closing plants, they're laying off workers and they're cancelling expansions.

For example, in Thunder Bay, Buchanan Forest Products has laid off 400 workers. In Windsor, Daimler-Chrysler has shelved plans for a 2,500-worker assembly plant and parts operation. In Orangeville, your own backyard, Manac closed its van plant and is sending 235 workers to Quebec, a province that has affordable, reliable public power.

Hydro deregulation is killing so many jobs that you could start a new club. You could call it Ernie and Dalton's Lost Jobs Ontario. How many jobs does Hydro privatization and deregulation have to kill before you admit that it's a bad strategy?

Hon Ernie Eves (Premier, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): It's interesting how the leader of the third party takes business decisions that are made for a whole host of reasons by individual businesses and automatically equates that all of them happen because of one single issue that he wants to champion on the floor of the Legislature and outside.

The honourable member knows perfectly well—he points to DaimlerChrysler, for example—that the decision DaimlerChrysler made with respect to a new plant does not have anything to do with respect to hydro prices. He also knows that most large corporations have their own separate deal with OPG, which produces power. He knows over the weekend that Daimler talked about redoing their fiscal forecast. They're going to be losing money in the North American Chrysler market. He also knows that DaimlerChrysler said that they will spend up to \$1.4 billion in Brampton or Bramalea to expand their operations. I'm sure he just forgot all those facts when he was asking his question.

Mr Hampton: You might want to try that answer with the Globe and Mail columnist Eric Reguly, who used to be a friend of yours, who says your hydro privatization and deregulation scheme is killing jobs. You might want to try your answer with the workers at Falconbridge in Timmins, or Tembec's Cochrane mill, or Weyerhaeuser's mills in Chapleau and Sturgeon Falls, or Buchanan's mills in Dubreuilville, where they say specifically that hydro prices are shutting them down, or Domtar's mill in White River.

A lot of workers know that their factory, their plant, their mill, can't afford to pay 75% more on the hydro bill. That's the issue. You can try to blame it on all kinds of other factors, but in mill after mill, factory after factory, plant after plant, workers and employers know that your hydro privatization and deregulation scheme is killing jobs. When are you going to admit it's a failure and recognize that public power, publicly owned, not-for-profit hydroelectricity, is the way to go? When are you going to admit that?

Hon Mr Eves: I know it is difficult for the leader of the third party to sit there on that side of the House and acknowledge that for the past eight years there isn't one jurisdiction in the entire Western world that has outperformed the growth in the province of Ontario. Not one. I know it pains him to sit there and know that 1,150,000 more people are working in Ontario today than were working in 1995. It also pains him to know that when his government was in power, 10,000 jobs were lost in Ontario. With all due respect to the leader of the third party and his political party, their thinking, their programs and their ideals, the reality is that by allowing the people of this province to keep more of their own money, there are 1,150,000 more of them working today than there were in 1995. We have a standard of living in this province and in this country second to none anywhere in the Western world.

WAYNE LEWIS'S RELEASE

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is for the Minister of Public Safety and Security. Wayne Lewis was released from Maplehurst detention centre on Monday, June 2. On Thursday, June 6, he murdered 22-year-old Ellisse Phillips, former common-law wife to Lewis and a constituent of mine. Wayne Lewis then turned the gun on himself and committed suicide.

This man had a violent history of previous gun offences. He had been arrested regarding an incident with a gun and an ex-girlfriend. In July of 2000, he shot a man in Hamilton and left him paralyzed. One and a half years later, he was sentenced to four years and 10 months in jail. However, due to the conditions of the jail and the strike, the judge ruled that the time spent before sentencing would count as three to one in time. He served one year in a provincial institution.

Wayne Lewis should still have been in jail when he murdered Ellisse Phillips. Two things are clear: the provincial system failed and this violent offender should not have been released and there were very few restrictions on Wayne Lewis's parole when he was released. In view of the circumstances, Minister, will you agree to a full, independent, outside investigation into the circumstances regarding Wayne Lewis's release from a provincial jail?

1500

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): There's no question this is a tragic case and we want to extend our condolences to the family and friends of the victims in this situation.

As the member opposite knows, this is currently under investigation, not just by the police but the special investigations unit as well. Hopefully, you would understand that it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the circumstances surrounding this, as it is still under investigation. Following completion of that investigation, if there's a need for a further review by the ministry or the government, we will certainly be prepared to consider that.

Mr Agostino: The SIU is carrying out an investigation because of the fact that police were called to the scene and, just as they got there, the crime occurred. There is no trial upcoming; the man committed suicide. What we need is an outside, independent investigation into the circumstances regarding Ellisse. It has to be independent. Police are not allowed to investigate themselves. This is a serious matter. I don't think the ministry has the ability or should be able to investigate itself in this as well. The entire system has failed this young woman.

Hamilton detective Mike Thomas, who arrested Wayne Lewis, said, "Guns were a part of his life.... Lewis was a cold-blooded man. I always thought he'd kill or be killed." Probation and parole should have known that Lewis had a lengthy history of violent behaviour. There were few conditions attached to parole. We also learned that while in jail, he had a long history of violent behaviour against inmates and guards. There seems to be overwhelming evidence that this man was extremely dangerous. Did the Ontario parole know of this? What steps were taken upon his release?

Those are the types of questions to be asked, and again I urge you—this is independent of any police investigation. There will be no criminal charges here. The man killed himself. I urge you to call an independent investigation into the matter today, specifically into the release and the surrounding circumstances of this man's parole, and what actions were taken to protect the public from this violent offender.

Hon Mr Runciman: I have to get this clarified. My understanding was that the individual was on probation, not parole. I have asked for a review of the file with respect to the situation and the circumstances surrounding it but, beyond that, I don't think it would be appropriate to comment today.

PETERBOROUGH LIBRARY

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): My question is for the Minister of Culture. On Saturday, May 31, you and I had the pleasure of attending the official launch of the Peterborough Public Library's new initiative, the new TEKdesk, which provides technological support to library staff across the province 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

As MPP for the riding of Peterborough, I'm very pleased and indeed impressed by the innovative thinking demonstrated by the Peterborough library and wish to acknowledge the hard work and efforts of the staff: Ken

Doherty, library manager; Becky Rogers, head librarian, Bruce Roxburgh, project manager; Kevin Edwards, community opportunities innovative network; as well as all the TEKdesk support staff and library staff who helped make this happen. It is their vision that enables other libraries all over Ontario to have access to technical help at all hours of the day.

I am sure you know, Minister, that this type of assistance is invaluable, especially to those smaller remote, rural and First Nations libraries. Minister, can you tell this House a little bit more about this wonderful initiative?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture): First, I'd like to acknowledge the member for Peterborough's leadership on library issues, and in particular on behalf of his own library.

He is quite right; the Peterborough Public Library showed an extreme amount of leadership. They took a survey in 2001 to see what the needs of libraries were across the province. As you can appreciate, the needs of libraries in the smaller remote and northern areas are quite different than the larger libraries here in Toronto, for example, or even in York region. What they discovered is that in many of the small libraries they often have only one staff member and the rest are volunteers. So with respect to high-tech support, they haven't got access to it. What the Peterborough library did—and it went well beyond the bounds of Peterborough—was to have some sort of networking support province-wide, which is a great benefit to these smaller libraries.

I think this is something that is to be commended and I know it is going to be acted upon by many of the small libraries in our small communities across the province.

Mr Stewart: Thank you for your comments. I know that in addition to the TEKdesk, the Peterborough Public Library also took advantage of this initiative internally to digitize its own collection of images from the Balsillie Collection of the Roy Studio Images, which is housed in that library. The collection was acquired by the city of Peterborough in 2000, through the generous donation of Jim Balsillie. This collection comprises over 400,000 historical glass plate and film negatives. The original studio was established in 1896 in Peterborough, and for over three generations Roy photographers chronicled the history, people, industry and past times of the city and county. Minister, I wonder if you could tell the House just how important libraries like mine and collections that they house are to the people of Ontario.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: In particular, this year, which is the 100th anniversary of the Archives of Ontario, I'd like to say that libraries are a tremendous repository of information and historical artifacts and history from across the province. Just a couple of weeks ago, I happened to go by the heritage centre in Markham and I picked up a book about the history of Scarborough written by the Reverend Bonis. The member for Scarborough East, who is a long-time Scarborough resident, and the member for Scarborough Centre, who is as well—the member for Scar-

borough Southwest is probably newer to Scarborough, he is younger than us, but the member for Scarborough-Agincourt will remember this. Reverend Bonis, who was a historian for Scarborough—my family moved to Agincourt 50 years ago—told us a lot, through the libraries, about David and Mary Thomson, the pioneer families and the Taber Hill First Nations burial ground. This is how libraries contribute to your community, preserving the history of our province and our communities and informing young people—although none of us are young people any more—across the province.

VISITORS

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Deputy Premier, Minister of Education): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'd like to recognize the Ontario Parent Council in the gallery here today.

HOME CARE

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My question is to the Associate Minister of Long-Term Care. I know you've received an invitation to come to Sudbury and explain to some of my constituents what they are supposed to do in order to survive once the homemaking services provided to them by our local CCAC are cut off on June 23. In the event that you refuse to come to Sudbury, can you please tell Pat Jones, who is in her late 50s and suffers from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, is on oxygen and whose lungs are so severely damaged that she can't do this type of work, or Don McLeod, who is 37, has only one arm and one leg and is currently being treated by his doctor for fluid on his remaining arm, how they are supposed to access these necessary services, since both of them, very publicly at a press conference, have said they cannot afford to purchase them? They're waiting for your answer.

Hon Dan Newman (Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): Helping to provide quality home care services to Ontarians is indeed a priority for this government. With respect to the member's question, the ministry has been in contact with the Manitoulin-Sudbury Community Care Access Centre and has been assured that the most important services that keep clients in their homes and allow them to maintain their independence are not affected by the changes to homemaking services. These unaffected services include personal support, such as bathing, help with eating, dressing and assistance with medications, as well as caregiver respite, which includes support for family members living with and caring for clients with a high level of dependency. As well, not all homemaking tasks are changing. Existing clients who can't go without help with meal preparation or laundry services will still receive the assistance they need from the Manitoulin-Sudbury Community Care Access Centre.

Mr Bartolucci: With all due respect, that's a cold, callous, cruel and crass answer. Three thousand people are affected in our area with your cut to homemaking

services. Tell Marion Doyon who has an ileostomy, is 82 years old, lives on a fixed income, can't afford to pay for these services and can't remain in her home without these services; or Pauline Ross, who has suffered two aneurysms, two strokes, two heart attacks, has one side of her body paralyzed and can't afford these services. These and 3,000 other people are going to have those services cut off. Tell them today what your advice is for them to be living independently.

1510

Hon Mr Newman: Again, not all homemaking tasks are changing. Existing clients who can't go without help with meal preparation and laundry services will still continue to receive the assistance they need.

I say to the honourable member across the way that our government is taking unprecedented steps to provide quality home care across this province, and that includes home care with community care access centres. The Manitoulin-Sudbury CCAC has seen its funding actually increase by 22% since 1995. Last year alone, the Manitoulin-Sudbury CCAC saw an increase of almost \$190,000 in new additional funding to help the people of that part of the province.

I will say that the ministry will continue to monitor the delivery of home care services by the community care access centre, and we will continue to work with them so clients can get the assistance they need.

In Ontario, we provide the broadest basket of home care services in Canada, the best home care in all of Canada, and we do it all without an income test or a means test.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS INFORMATION

Mr AL McDonald (Nipissing): My question is for the Minister of Labour. I understand your ministry is working hard to ensure that workers whose first language is neither French nor English understand their rights and responsibilities under the Employment Standards Act. Could you tell us what you are doing in this respect?

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): I want to thank the honourable member for the question.

Interjection.

Hon Mr Clark: Thanks to the member from Hamilton East also. I know he's keenly interested in this.

In a province as diverse as ours, many valued members of the workforce have a first language other than English or French. Our Employment Standards Act recognizes the need to provide services in languages that are not in English or French to those who need to understand their rights and responsibilities. If the majority language in a workplace is not English or French, the act requires the employer to post material from the ministry in the major language as well as English. We now have posters for the Employment Standards Act available in French and 10 majority languages—Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Spanish, Tamil and Vietnamese. The ministry has translated and

updated a general brochure on employer-employee rights and responsibilities under the ESA in all of these languages.

Mr McDonald: Minister, thank you for the information on the multilingual accessibility of the employment standards legislation. Knowing your rights is an important part of being safe on the job. Can you tell us what other initiatives your ministry is undertaking to ensure all of Ontario's workers understand their rights and responsibilities under the Employment Standards Act?

Hon Mr Clark: The ministry has published a guide to the Employment Standards Act and a variety of fact sheets on such topics as hours of work, overtime and minimum wage. These documents are available through the ministry Web site as well as ministry offices, government information centres and Publications Ontario. Special fact sheets have been prepared for agricultural workers and domestic workers which are translated into the 10 minority languages.

The ministry Web site and WorkSmartOntario include education material for young people about their rights and responsibilities under the Employment Standards Act. WorkSmartOntario is the first government Web site in Canada to offer young people comprehensive information about workplace health and safety, and employment standards such as hours of work, overtime and holiday pay. Extensive information for young employees on these rights and responsibilities is available at the government information centres, ministry offices and Publications Ontario, including the fact sheet entitled What Young Workers Should Know. Perhaps you might want to check it out.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Minister of Public Safety, your pistol-packing, gunslinger buddy Norm Gardner has found himself in hot water once again. He finds himself having been gifted with a \$1,500 revolver after setting up a deal for Para-Ordnance, the firearms manufacturer. He forgot to pay for it until he got caught and then cut a cheque, we're told, for but \$700 for a \$1,500 gun. You see, Mr Gardner actually shoots these things, and he shoots people with them.

Minister, do you think it's appropriate for your hand-picked appointee to the Toronto Police Services Board to be receiving gifts like this for arrangements he makes for Para-Ordnance and their participation in conventions, and have you called him to suggest that he might step down while the matter is being investigated?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Minister of Public Safety and Security): Having sat in those seats for a few years, I understand the member's interest in raising this issue. But I think he would also appreciate that the Toronto Police Services Board has called on the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services to consider investigating the allegations surrounding Mr Gardner's conduct. As he knows, the board falls under the ambit of

the ministry for which I'm responsible, so it would be quite inappropriate for me to prejudice a decision that may be taken or will be taken by the civilian commission with respect to any personal opinion or view I might have.

VISITORS

Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North): I'm sure all of my colleagues will want to join me in welcoming students from St Martin school in Terrace Bay, led by principal Joy Magee. They are in the west gallery. Thank you for joining us today. It's good to see you.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): I would like to introduce Susan Schrempf, who is sitting right up here in our gallery. She is the mother of Bridget Schrempf, who is one of our pages. She also runs the Chi-Cheemaun.

MEMBERS' ANNIVERSARIES

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I'd like to congratulate the member for St Catharines on his 27th anniversary as an MPP in the Legislature today, and in light of that I'd like to seek unanimous consent to allow him to read as many petitions as he would like today.

The Speaker (Hon Gary Carr): You are kidding. No?

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

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I would like to congratulate the member for Lanark-Carleton, who on this very same day is celebrating—I think it's our 26th, Norm, not our 27th.

Interjection: He was thinking one year from—

Mr Bradley: Oh, we're into the next year soon. OK. I'd like to have all members congratulate the member for Lanark-Carleton on being elected on June 9, 1977, in very difficult times to be elected, and serving so diligently for so many years.

PETITIONS

HOME CARE

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This petition was gathered by an individual requiring homemaking services, from the Finlandia Hoivakoti, and it says:

"Whereas, we are outraged by the community care access centre's decision to cut homemaking services to seniors;

"Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned," 180 of them, "petition the Ontario Legislature to ensure these cuts do not take place."

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas some motorists are recklessly endangering the lives of children by not obeying the highway traffic law requiring them to stop for school buses with their warning lights activated;

“Whereas the current law has no teeth to protect the children who ride the school buses of Ontario and who are at risk and their safety is in jeopardy;

“Whereas the current school bus law is difficult to enforce since not only is a licence plate number required, but positive identification of the driver and vehicle as well, which makes it extremely difficult to obtain a conviction;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the measures contained in private member’s Bill 112, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to protect children while on school buses, presented by Pat Hoy, MPP, Chatham-Kent Essex, be immediately enacted....

“The Bill 112 imposed liability on the owner of a vehicle that fails to stop for a school bus that has its overhead red signal lights flashing....

“And we ask for the support of all members of the Legislature.”

This is signed by a number of residents from Kingsville, Cottam, Leamington and surrounding areas.

1520

HIGHWAY 407

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that reads as follows:

“Whereas motorists using Highway 407 are being gouged with charges that are far beyond what is reasonable and justified;

“Whereas billing errors are forcing motorists to spend hours on the telephone trying to have such errors corrected;

“Whereas some motorists in frustration and exasperation are paying charges they did not incur for the use of Highway 407;

“Whereas the government of Ontario acts as an enforcer for the Highway 407 Corp and is, in our view, complicit in the collection of questionable charges;

“Whereas the Eves-Harris government sold Highway 407 to a buyer who has increased charges well beyond what the government promised;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly to condemn the Conservative government of Ontario for selling Highway 407 to private interests and for permitting the Highway 407 Corp to raise charges for the use of the highway and other administrative charges that cannot be justified.”

I affix my signature; I’m in complete agreement.

HYDRO RATES

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I have a petition here which is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it deals with skyrocketing electricity bills.

“Whereas electricity bills have skyrocketed under the Harris-Eves government’s flawed electricity plan; and

“Whereas some consumers have signed higher fixed-rate contracts with retailers, without adequate consumer protection; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government has failed to address electricity supply shortages in Ontario, forcing the purchase of American power at premium prices, driving up prices still further; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government appointed a board of directors for Hydro One that has been paying themselves extravagant salaries, compensation packages and severances for senior executives; and

“Whereas Hydro One bought 90 municipal utilities, serving about 240,000 people across Ontario, at premium prices and with borrowed funds. These purchases with borrowed funds have increased Ontario’s debt burden; and

“Whereas the Harris-Eves government has added additional fees and taxes to local electricity distribution companies. These charges have also been passed along to consumers;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the Harris-Eves government take immediate action to ensure that Ontarians have fair and reasonable prices for the necessary commodity of electricity in Ontario and that the Harris-Eves government and its leader, Ernie Eves, call a general election on the instability of the energy market so that Ontarians will have a voice on this issue.”

I totally agree with the petition and have signed it accordingly.

HIGHWAY SAFETY

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I have a petition signed by around 100 students from Central Algoma Secondary School.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Highway 17, known as the Trans-Canada Highway, between Ripple Rock on the west and Mink Point Road on the east in the township of Johnson, is unsafe, particularly in light of the fact that school buses enter and exit on to this stretch of the road to serve a secondary school of 650 students and an elementary school of 150 students; and

“Whereas there have been several accidents, the latest of which resulted in the fatality of a 16-year-old male;

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

“That the Ministry of Transportation do immediately make changes to the signage, speed limit, width of lane and/or install caution lights in order to make this section

of this highway safer for our students as well as for all travellers on this section of the highway.”

I agree with this petition and affix my signature.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas some motorists are recklessly endangering the lives of children by not obeying the highway traffic law requiring them to stop for school buses with their warning lights activated;

“Whereas the current law has no teeth to protect the children who ride the school buses of Ontario, and who are at risk and their safety is in jeopardy;

“Whereas the current school bus law is difficult to enforce, since not only is the licence plate number required but positive identification of the driver and vehicle as well, which makes it extremely difficult to obtain a conviction;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the measures contained in private member’s Bill 112, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to protect children while on school buses, presented by Pat Hoy, MPP, Chatham-Kent-Essex, be immediately enacted...”

The bill imposes “liability on the owner of a vehicle that fails to stop for a school bus that has its overhead red signal lights flashing; and...”

“We ask for the support of all members of the Legislature.”

I continue to receive these petitions from across Ontario. This one is signed by residents of Acton.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and the Islands): I have a petition that was forwarded to me by Kara-Lee Potter, who is the secretary of the Spruce Lodge resident advocacy council in Stratford, Ontario. It states:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“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.”

I agree with it, and I’ve signed the petition accordingly.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the auto industry accounts for approximately 50% of Ontario exports to the United States, supports another three or more jobs elsewhere in the economy and contributes billions of dollars in tax revenues to governments; and

“Whereas the auto industry is the economic lifeblood of communities, such as St Catharines, Oshawa, St Thomas, Alliston, Windsor, Oakville, Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo; and

“Whereas the auto industry has experienced job losses and seen challenges due to competition from industries in Mexico, the recent recession in the United States and delivery problems at Ontario’s borders; and

“Whereas the prosperity of the province of Ontario is dependent in large part on an auto industry that is competitive and dynamic; and

“Whereas select committees of the Legislature tend to be task-oriented and non-partisan in their deliberations;”

We, the undersigned, ask “that the Ernie Eves government convene a select committee on the Ontario auto industry that consults with labour, business and the public in a timely fashion to address the challenges and opportunities that the engine of Ontario’s economy will be facing in the future.”

I affix my signature; I’m in complete agreement.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas guaranteeing the safety and security of our children is universally recognized as absolutely essential by all people in the province of Ontario; and

“Whereas the ability of Ontario’s schools to provide adequate levels of safety and security for Ontario’s children has been called into question by recent incidents in which children have been attacked by individuals who have gained illegal entry to schools; and

“Whereas parents and school officials want to make physical changes to make our schools safer; and

“Whereas parents and school officials are concerned about the loss of educational assistants, custodians, lunchroom supervisors, librarians, physical education teachers, computer lab instructors, music instructors, vice-principals and other supports staff, who are the eyes and ears of our schools; and

“Whereas the lack of money for staffing and capital repairs is a direct result of the disastrous education funding formula adopted by the Conservative government;

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

“(1) That the government of Ontario immediately institute a school safety fund that will provide schools with adequate funding to make necessary renovations that are required for school safety.

“(2) That the new education minister immediately amend the Conservative education funding formula to allow for adequate education funding that will provide funds for adequate staffing, building repairs and quality education.”

This petition was put together after a child was sexually assaulted in a school in my riding. I will affix my signature to this petition.

1530

HYDRO RATES

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“The Harris-Eves government has mismanaged the electricity policy of the province of Ontario.

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

“The Ernie Eves government forces Great Lakes Power customers to pay into a fund for rural rate assistance, and rural rate assistance would reduce the distribution bills for customers by hundreds of dollars each year.

“Therefore I support the efforts of Mike Brown, MPP, to have rural rate assistance extended to the GLP service area immediately.”

This petition is signed by hundreds of people from places like Goulais River, St Joseph Island, Desbarats and Bruce Mines.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I continue to receive these petitions. This particular set was signed by residents of Windsor:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas some motorists are recklessly endangering the lives of children by not obeying the highway traffic law requiring them to stop for school buses with their warning lights activated; and

“Whereas the current law has no teeth to protect the children who ride the school buses of Ontario, and who are at risk and their safety is in jeopardy; and

“Whereas the current school bus law is difficult to enforce since not only is the licence plate number required, but positive identification of the driver and vehicle as well, which makes it extremely difficult to obtain a conviction;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the measures contained in private member’s Bill 112, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to protect children while on school buses, presented by Pat Hoy, MPP, Chatham-Kent Essex, be immediately enacted.

“The bill imposes liability on the owner of a vehicle that fails to stop for a school bus that has its overhead red signal lights flashing, and we ask for the support of all members of the Legislature.”

I too have signed this petition.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Another petition on our education system and the cuts:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Progressive Conservative government promised in 1995 not to cut classroom spending, but has already cut at least \$1 billion from our schools and is now closing many classrooms completely; and

“Whereas international language weekend classes are a needed part of learning for many students in our area; and

“Whereas the Education Act, specifically regulation 285(5), mandates provision of these programs where demand exists; and

“Whereas the Conservative funding formula is forcing the Toronto District School Board to cancel these Saturday classes for groups who want this programming;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to instruct the Minister of Education to restore meaningful and flexible funding to the Toronto school boards to ensure that they are able to continue to accommodate these Saturday international languages classes.”

I will affix my signature to this petition because I fully support it.

VISITOR

The Acting Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): The time for petitions has expired. Before I call orders of the day, I want to draw to the attention of members the presence, in the members’ gallery, of Mr Ron Hansen, the former member for Lincoln, who was here during the 35th Parliament. Welcome, Ron.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2003 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 26, 2003, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr David Christopherson): We are beginning debate with the third party.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: I didn't get that ahead of time. If there's a problem, check it with the table and I'll make any changes if that's not correct, but my understanding is that it is indeed going to the third party. Therefore, the member for Niagara Centre now has the floor.

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Let's recall which budget we're talking about. This is the bogus budget. This is the contemptuous budget. This is the budget that was delivered up at the auto parts plant, far, far away from Queen's Park and the Legislative Assembly, at the auto parts plant of one of Mr Eves's wealthy buddies, one Frank Stronach, who moaned and groaned about his oh-so-modest income. He was at a shareholders' annual general meeting and Mr Stronach moaned and groaned about his oh-so-modest income of—what was it, Ms Churley?—some \$56 million last year.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth): Something like that.

Mr Kormos: That's his personal income. I'm not talking about corporate income; his personal income. This same bogus budget, this contemptible, contemptuous budget, put another \$3.5 million in Mr Stronach's pocket like that; more tax cuts for Ernie Eves's wealthy friends. But what is most significant is the people who were ignored, the people who were denied any relief in this budget.

Just this weekend, like everybody else, I was doing all sorts of fascinating and wonderful things in my riding down in Niagara Centre. On Saturday, I was at the annual review of the air cadet squadron in Thorold over at Monsignor Clancy school. The Thorold air cadet squadron had six decades of history at Thorold high school, with the public board. You will recall me asking the then Minister of Education in this Legislature why it was that she threw them out of that historic home of theirs at Thorold high school. That's what happened. Because the public board had been defunded by this government, Thorold high school shut its doors to the Thorold air cadet squadron—incredible. This government had little to say that provided any relief for those young women and men—bright, capable young people—impressive as all get out, I've got to tell you.

Out of the 30 or so members of that squadron, 20-plus are going on summer training courses. One young warrant officer is going to London on an exchange—not taxpayer-funded—and, quite frankly, he'll be living in far more modest circumstances while in London and travelling about England than did our Minister of the Environ-

ment when he was there on his junket as Minister of Energy, as we talked about last Thursday. Two other young cadets are taking flight training, one taking air traffic control training, and dozens are going up to Trenton—you're familiar with Trenton—taking any number of leadership courses and basic training. These are bright, disciplined, skilled, ambitious young women and men.

It was with regret on Saturday that I learned that now the Catholic board is forced to begin charging this air cadet squadron rent for use of the facilities at Monsignor Clancy. Where I come from, folks who pay taxes—and they do—expect those public buildings like our schools to be safe for their kids when their kids are in them. You heard that being addressed today, that this government, yes, has created a serious state of risk, especially in our elementary schools, because of the destaffing of those schools: vice-principals, gone; custodians, gone; secretaries, gone; teachers' aides, gone; specialized teaching staff like music teachers, gone. We've had some horrifying instances just recently here in the city of Toronto of kids being accosted by strangers who have managed to penetrate those schools and get into the hallways because of the destaffing. So our schools have been left in not just a sad and regrettable but dangerous state as well.

Then to top it off, as I said, I learned on Saturday that this air cadet squadron, these young people doing so well, doing such a great job, like so many other young people—as members of the cadet movement or the scouting or Girl Guide movement—are going to be called upon to pay rent from what are incredibly modest resources that they work with. Yes, when the young warrant officer from that squadron is in London, England, I have no hesitation in telling you that nobody's going to be picking up a \$10,000 tab for his so-called ground transportation, like Mr Stockwell, then-Minister of Energy, was the beneficiary of.

Ten grand for a week of ground transportation: what the heck was he travelling around in? Holy zonkers, I've been to Europe and I know the euro is a pretty high comparative rate to the Canadian dollar, but \$10,000 for a week buys you some pretty luxurious wheels. I couldn't even begin to think whether it's a Bentley or a Rolls or a Lamborghini, or one of those exotic, undoubtedly not North American-made cars that the then Minister of Energy, Mr Stockwell, was being escorted around in. Is he sitting back there, you know, with the plush leather and the window divider between him and the chauffeur up front? Did Mr Stockwell refer to him as Jeeves with that sort of WASPy arrogance that only Mr Stockwell manages to be able to conjure up?

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I can just see him there, puffing on the big cigar at taxpayers' expense, and the Waterford crystal glasses rattling ever so slightly as the Rolls limo goes over the occasional speed strip, but not enough to spill a drop of the expensive cognac or Scotch or Armagnac that the Minister of Energy was being wined on during this taxpayer-sponsored tour of Rome, Paris, London—and was

it Glasgow that was added to that itinerary, Mr Gill? Mr Gill, did you accompany the Minister of Energy when he was on that taxpayer-funded junket through Europe?

Mr O'Toole, you haven't come back with an affected French accent that would reveal the fact that somehow you were his consort during this taxpayer-funded, plush tour of the capitals of Europe. I'm not sure, but I don't think Mr Spina went. I doubt if Mr Wettlaufer was Mr Stockwell's companion for the two weeks.

Somebody had to go, because they blew 27,000 bucks on airfare alone—27 grand. Just how big is this entourage? You've got Middle Eastern sheiks and royalty who travel about the world with smaller entourages than Mr Stockwell must have had on that junket through Europe. That's 27 grand of taxpayers' money on airfare alone.

I'm not sure, but I don't think this was the charter that you and I are inclined to fly on from time to time, you know, where our knees are up to our chin and where our neighbours are overflowing—just as we're overflowing our seats, they're overflowing into ours—and we get that package of lacklustre and rather stale peanuts mid-flight. I just don't think that Mr Stockwell, the Minister of Energy, as he was then, now Minister of the Environment, was travelling carriage class when you're talking about 27 grand. He certainly wasn't staying at bed and breakfasts. He wasn't staying at the local student hostel by any stretch: 500 bucks a pop for hotel rooms; 500 bucks a night for hotel rooms.

I've watched movies; I've read novels. I would have no idea what one looks like myself, but 500 bucks a pop buys you a pretty classy hotel room. I think it buys you a suite. I think it buys you a butler and a maid and in-room, in-suite dining. I think you've got expensive Persian carpets on the floors and the finest of antique furniture as a bedside table at 500 bucks a night. But I suppose for a minister of the crown who's travelling about at taxpayers' expense, once you leave the finely crafted leathers of the Rolls, you just couldn't bring yourself to book into a mere one- or two-star accommodation. You've got to go big or go home; you go five-star.

Mind you, it was something of a swan song; it was something of a farewell tour. It seems to me that he was a lame-duck Minister of Energy, because it wasn't too long after this extravagant, plush, posh tour of Europe on the taxpayers' tab that he was no longer Minister of Energy. That's why today we tabled some legislation and got first reading on it; it's a junkets bit of legislation.

I think it's time for the junket junkies to go cold turkey and get some rehab. The junkets legislation will solve the little bit of an impasse we have here, because the minister seems to have had a little bit of a memory lapse where he's not quite sure how much of it OPG paid for and how much of it the taxpayers paid for directly, as compared to indirectly through OPG, because it's six of one and half a dozen of the other.

He didn't seem, as far as I know from reading the press reports from one Martin Mittelstaedt, who was slandered and libelled by Mr Stockwell as a prevaricator, a liar—that's what a prevaricator is. Mr Stockwell said

that the author of that news report in the *Globe and Mail*, one Martin Mittelstaedt, prevaricated and fabricated. Well, please. Everybody's wrong but Mr Stockwell? Everybody's not telling the truth? This is the world's biggest conspiracy since the grassy knoll conjecture when President Kennedy got himself shot. Surely Mr Stockwell is the victim of the biggest conspiracy ever concocted, according to his version of these events.

The junket registry would also simply require those who take off on grand tours like Mr Stockwell enjoyed to file a complete list of all expenses, a list of who it was that accompanied and, oh yes, an itinerary, the remarkable thing about the Stockwell junket: Mr Stockwell at the Trevi Fountain throwing the coins in, sitting at the bottom of those Spanish Steps, walking along the River Thames, passing Big Ben and Westminster and the lovely sights of London and, my goodness, Paris—the Latin Quarter, the Left Bank, those quaint but oh-so-expensive bistros with their \$80 lunches and their \$200 and \$300 bottles of wine, the elevator ride to the top of the Eiffel Tower so that one can see the sights unimpeded by storefronts and building façades, perhaps a little risqué side trip to the Moulin Rouge to see—what are they called; the Folies Bergères?

Ms Churley, help me.

Ms Churley: I wouldn't know. I've never been there.

Mr Kormos: This is big-ticket stuff. This can exhaust a gold card. This is platinum card turf. And the sad thing is, Mr Stockwell didn't even say thank you to the taxpayers out there, folks like the people down where I come from, for sending him off on this farewell tour, nor is he prepared to tell us exactly what he learned during those two weeks touring the capitals of Europe that made him more effective as a Minister of Energy and perhaps now as Minister of the Environment, in view of the fact that this was very much a farewell tour.

There's nothing in the budget, nothing at all, speaking to those lowest-paid workers in our province, those women and men—mostly women; understand this—working at minimum wage. The number is increasing. The largest single chunk of them are single moms working at minimum wage, stuck at \$6.85 an hour for the last eight years plus.

During the NDP government from 1990 to 1995, minimum wages were raised four times. The minimum wage has not been increased by a penny since 1995, when the Tories seized power here in the province of Ontario. Minimum wage workers are stuck at \$6.85 an hour. In fact, their income has eroded by 20% because of the impact of inflation and the cost of living over the course of the last eight years. Not a penny for the lowest-paid workers—not a penny. I think that's a shame. That is a crime.

Not a word of comfort to pensioners, who have seen their pensions eroded by stock market scams, stock market schemes, by the likes of John Roth and others. Remember John Roth of Nortel? He went home with millions. He undoubtedly is going to get a significant property tax break, probably to the tune of \$10,000,

\$20,000, \$30,000 or \$40,000. John Roth went home with millions after ripping off little shareholders whose brokers were still selling them Nortel at 50 bucks on the way down. I think it's enjoyed something of a recovery. What's it now, \$3 or \$3.50? John Roth walked away with millions. He killed thousands of jobs, gutted a company that had been a stable and significant part of our telecommunications industry here in this country—well, it was—and left oh-so-many pensioners, and seniors in general, wondering where the next month's rent cheque or grocery bill payment was going to come from.

1550

The budget said nothing to persons with disabilities. Just like those on social assistance, they've been stuck at their sub-poverty levels of income since 1995: not a penny in increase.

Ms Churley: It decreased in 1995. Remember?

Mr Kormos: Social assistance recipients were slashed by 21.6%, just shy of 22%. And think about this: over the course of the last eight years they've suffered another 20% erosion in the buying power of those meagre and, again I say to you, criminal allowances. They were cut 22% helter-skelter in the first instance by this government, and they've been cut another 20% over the course of the last eight years by virtue of this government's failure to respond to their dire need.

I fear there are precious few government members who have actually seen how an ODSP recipient or a person on social assistance is forced to survive here in the city of Toronto, where rents are outrageous because this government has abandoned any concept of rent control and let the landlords run free rein. Even in small-town Ontario, where I come from, where our northern colleagues come from, social assistance and ODSP levels are literally unlivable. They are. You find kids living in poverty, poverty forced upon them, foisted upon them by this government.

New Democrats are proposing practical solutions. They are. We think our junket registry is a practical solution to the problem that Mr Stockwell has created by his European fling. We believe in practical solutions.

We believe the minimum wage has to be increased immediately to eight bucks an hour, with an annual review so minimum-wage workers never again fall behind like you, Mr Gill, and your colleagues have forced them to over the course of the last eight years.

That's why we believe there's a need for meaningful pension reform in this province so that every worker is a party to and a participant in a fixed benefit pension plan, a pension that becomes vested immediately, a pension that is portable and indexed. When I was a kid, in the 1950s, folks worried about not living long enough. Now all of us in our constituency offices are meeting folks who are worried about living too long.

Mr Eves has a solution, he says. He goes to a nursing home and as much as tells the residents, "Get off your duffs and get out there and get a job." That's what he said to them. "We don't need a retirement age of 65 in this

country." Incredible, the arrogance to go into a nursing home to tell our folks and our grandfolks—

Ms Churley: Did he go into a nursing home and say that?

Mr Kormos: Ernie Eves went to a nursing home to tell our folks and our grandfolks living out their final months and years to get off their duffs and go get a job.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Who said that?

Mr Kormos: Ernie Eves told old folks, our folks and our grandparents, "Get off your butts and go out there and get a job. Forget about the 65 retirement age." Where I come from, people work darned hard, and they fought hard over the course of decades and generations to ensure a retirement age that allows them to live out their senior years and enjoy their grandkids and help raise them. They fought hard for pensions, like the Inco workers down in Port Colborne whom I joined on Friday morning fighting for pensions.

New Democrats are fighting for pensions too. We're fighting for a better minimum wage; we're fighting for better benefits for social assistance and ODSP recipients. We're not going to support this budget. I thought you got that impression clearly, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: Members now have up to two minutes for questions or comments.

Hon Brad Clark (Minister of Labour): I don't know where to begin with the member for Niagara Centre. Every day that he comes in this House he has another conspiracy theory of some type. I honestly believe you must believe The X-Files is a real program, that it's real TV. The most recent one he walked in here with was that he was haranguing me the other day about the towels in my washroom. You can't win with this guy. If we had paper towels, we'd be insulting the environment because we were using disposable paper towels. If you use reusable towels, then you're insulting someone else. You simply can't win with him.

His preposterous statement that the Premier of Ontario was telling seniors that they had to go back to work—give me a break. Surely to goodness the member can't honestly believe that, when the Human Rights Commissioner himself has stated that there should be a ban on mandatory retirement. I don't understand this. The member for Niagara Centre historically will hold up the Human Rights Commissioner to such a platform, stating that this individual can make no errors, and this man states that we should ban mandatory retirement, that it is wrong. Now you turn around and you want to enforce mandatory retirement. You seem to pick the people you want to support and use them to your advantage to support your conspiracy theories, which is quite common actually.

The comments he made about the minimum wage: again, the member knows quite honestly that economists on both sides of the coin, whether they support increasing the minimum wage or not, will state that there is a risk to job opportunities if you increase the minimum wage. So this government on this side decided to cut taxes to low-

pay earners. We cut taxes; 825,000 minimum wage earners and low-income earners are no longer paying provincial taxes. That's something they didn't do when they were in office. They raised their taxes.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I want to follow up on the comments of the member for Niagara Centre. I just say to the public, this is the campaign document that the Conservatives ran on the last time, 1999, and it promised these tax cuts. It says here under property tax cuts, "We'll cut the provincial portion of residential property taxes by 20%.... This cut will put \$500 million back in the hands of individuals and families."

Well, guess what? They didn't. They've cancelled half of it. They said, "We're not going to go ahead with this." As a matter of fact, they said, "We'll make it mandatory for owners of rental units to pass on their savings to tenants through lower rents." Well, it was all just a fraud. They didn't do that at all. The minister said just last week, "We've decided to cancel that tax cut." Surprise, surprise.

Then it was just a year ago that the Eves government got up and said, "Listen, we're sorry, we're not going to go ahead with \$1.5 billion worth of tax cuts that were scheduled for January 1, 2003"—five months ago. Why? Because they couldn't afford it. There wasn't the money there.

I always carry this document around: On the Right Track. This has Mr Eves's picture on the front. They had to abandon the Taxpayer Protection Act. Then they said, "Here's our explanation." They said, "How can the government justify breaking the Taxpayer Protection Act by delaying tax cuts?" They admitted they had to break their own fundamental Taxpayer Protection Act. The reason they did it was—they quoted Moody's—"To meet the target of a balanced budget, the government was forced to delay scheduled reductions in a number of tax rates."

I say to my colleague from Niagara Centre, who talked about schools charging more money for school use, take the promises of the Eves government with a grain of salt. Here we are a few weeks before an election, with more tax cut promises that they can't afford.

Ms Churley: I'm pleased to comment on the comments of my colleague the member from Niagara Centre. I noticed with interest the response from the labour minister to the member from Niagara Centre. I think essentially what he said was, "You pick which side you're on." I think we're all proud to say over here that, yes, we picked the side that we're on.

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What the member for Niagara Centre was talking about was that the New Democratic Party of Ontario stands up for the low-wage workers in this province. We stand up for an increase in minimum wage that this government, who has seen fit to give all MPPs in this place a big raise, has chosen to ignore since they were elected in 1995, to give one penny—add one penny—to minimum wage, to the lowest-paid workers in this

province. That's what the member for Niagara Centre was talking about.

He was talking about the pitiful conditions in which our disabled population live in this province and their desperate need for an increase, and they can't get it from this government. That's what the member for Niagara Centre was talking about.

He was talking about single moms who are trying to raise their kids and pay their exorbitant rents in this city—and across this province now—and feed their kids. They can't do it. That's the side that New Democrats stand for, not the Frank Stronachs of the world who, thank you very much, have more than enough money. The budget, the bogus budget that this government just recently announced, is putting how much more money into Frank Stronach's pocket?

Mr Kormos: It's \$3.5 million.

Ms Churley: Yes, \$3.5 million, while the lowest-paid workers in this province are being ignored, while tenants are paying more and more for rent, while our schools are losing more and more of the educators and the eyes and ears that keep them safe. That's the kind of side that New Democrats stand for, and we're proud of it.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): It's my pleasure to respond to the always humorous and never serious member from Niagara Centre. I'm alarmed to have to stand and hold him accountable—because he will get two minutes here—in terms of why he didn't talk about the substantial improvements to the lives of people in Ontario. I'm almost speechless.

More importantly, I think that he failed to talk about the important constituents of mine who I think of often, the senior citizens, and the tax break that was offered in our budget for that group. I think one of the things that I hear most about is the commitment to challenge the threat of cancer in people's lives. The \$1 billion that has been committed there is something that I believe is setting the standards very high, and I believe our Premier is certainly up to that job.

Again, he did talk, in an indirect way, about waste, and that's certainly something that this government has been wrestling with. We often refer to the extravagant spending over the years by the opposition and the third party on unnecessary processes. I think the NDP know all too well, at the end of the day when we were elected in 1995, that they were spending in excess of \$11 billion each year more than they were taking in as revenue. Almost 20% of their expenditures were in excess of revenue. We were met with that when we were elected in 1995, and it did take us a couple of years to get down to the balanced budget.

The hallmark of this government is to be prudent, to make the right decisions and to put the people of Ontario first. He didn't mention any of this, and I suspect in his two-minute wrap up he will probably get to the budget debate and mention something of context.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Niagara Centre now has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr Kormos: First, it was so refreshing to see and hear the member for Durham, Mr O'Toole, rise and join

us in our condemnation of Mr Stockwell and his outrageous abuse of taxpayer dollars. It's a pleasure, quite frankly, to know that there are some Tory backbenchers who see that Minister Stockwell's abuse of taxpayers' dollars is worthy of condemnation.

I was rather surprised by the Minister of Labour resurrecting the towel scandal here in the Legislature.

Interjection.

Mr Kormos: Well, I thought he would have wanted it to be put to rest. We blew the whistle on him last week, the sweetheart deal with a scab company that has an open-ended contract where they can double and triple and quadruple the price. These are not the sort of hand towels that workers in real workplaces dry their hands with. We're talking about 100% Egyptian combed cotton, the plushiest of towels and the finest of—

Laughter.

Mr Kormos: Well, we are—the finest of laundry services. Perhaps Mr Stockwell brought back some of those expensive perfumed French soaps from Paris, maybe some bath salts, perhaps some bubble bath so that when Mr Clark, the Minister of Labour, has to clean up after a hard, sweaty day in the cabinet room, he can bathe in the finest lavender scents that only the fine suppliers and purveyors of Paris can provide.

Perhaps it was at a brief stop at Harrods in London where Mr Stockwell brought back some modest little souvenirs, again from the expensive rack of perfumes, scents and colognes at high-priced department stores, so that after cleansing himself, Mr Clark can apply these plushiest of towels to his tender body and not generate a rash or a scratch and dab himself dry as he heads off home.

Why doesn't he try putting the towels in a duffel bag and laundering them at home like other people do instead of charging them out to private scab contractors?

The Acting Speaker: The floor is open for further debate.

Mr O'Toole: It is indeed my pleasure to rise to speak today in support of the government's budgetary policy as resuming the debate on the budgetary measures of this government. It's a policy that's been based on a strong, clear plan, a plan that has yielded more than one million net new jobs. By any measure, this is what governments attempt to do: to create the opportunity for investment and job creation for people and their future.

It's important to realize that the accountability of this government is that we've paid down more than \$5 billion of provincial debt. By any measure, rather than accumulating debt, we're now in the process of paying down the mortgage. All of the persons listening would know that is the mortgage that was accumulated more seriously in the 10 years from 1985 to 1995, which we often refer to as the "black hole," where in fact the debt had basically doubled.

At the same time, we're making our priorities in areas such as health care and education. Everyone here, and those listening, would know that we have spent more than ever in the history of any province on a per capita

basis, up to \$28 billion. When we were elected in 1995, those here would know it was \$17.4 billion. That's an additional \$10 billion, and more, for health care.

I should put to you that the question still remains: even with the Romanow report and the Kirby report, where is the federal government? Every Premier of every province is asking the same question, but our Premier and our Minister of Health, Tony Clement, have certainly stepped up to the challenge.

In the context of the other priority—it's hard to say which is first—education, as you know, we did have the fair funding model, and that model has resulted in a more equal distribution of funding for public education. By any measure, having served as a trustee for two terms, I can tell you that it was anything but equitable. Persons in assessment-poor communities received less money on a per capita basis than those in assessment-rich communities. This government had the courage to address that problem. In fact, more recently we appointed Dr Rozanski, who looked at the equity in the funding model, who said that the student-focused funding model was the right thing to do. He recommended some improvements and enhancements, and our Premier, Ernie Eves, has committed that money to go forward and to be spread with the same formula, referred to as the student-focused funding model.

There are boards, of course, that are going to be arguably spending a little bit less. There were transition funds to deal with those large, more wealthy boards, and those transition funds, whether or not they were spent correctly, are certainly part of the ongoing debate. But they remain our top priorities.

If someone were to ask me, the most important thing in all of this is keeping the economy strong, because fundamentally without a strong economy you can't have the resources to invest in your priorities; that's health care, education and, arguably, the environment as well, because the environment, in the broader sense, is related to our quality of life and certainly to our health care system.

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We continue to see positive results in our plan. Just last week our government announced that Ontario job creation had accounted for all of the jobs created in Canada in the first five months of 2003.

Ontario suffered the most during the recession when, Mr Speaker, respectfully, you were in government. I acknowledge that there was a recession. I was a regional councillor at the time. We all know that the controls at the provincial level in the overall aggregate of the functioning of the economy—provinces' functions don't have a terrible amount to do with that. In a direct sense, we can influence the tax policies. The federal government and the monetary controls that they have, interest rates and taxation powers, certainly have something to do, but it's also a global economy.

Well, here we have it, from having the worst performance in a 10-year period to having the best performance, and we heard our Premier say today it was the best

performance in over a decade of any country in the G7 and the European common market. It's clear that 44,000 full- and part-time jobs have been created. Employment in the health care industry rose by 11,000 jobs in May, largely offsetting the April job losses, while the accommodation and food services sector gained 7,000 jobs in May, partially offsetting the 12,000 jobs lost in April. A surge of 24,000 more Ontarians in the labour force confirms that Ontario's workers remain confident in their job prospects.

Balancing a budget is a difficult task for any government, but it's one we take very seriously. In fact, I would put to you that that is the brand of this government: the commitment of careful, difficult but necessary decision-making and responding to some very fundamental criteria, one of which is a balanced budget. I know the member from, I believe, Scarborough-Agincourt always has things to say on that. In fact he had an opportunity to say that in estimates. But I know that if, God forbid, they were ever given a chance to govern and, God forbid, he were to be Minister of Finance, he would know that history is clear, a Liberal government given power for a short period of time, and their brand, their moniker was very clear: raise taxes. In fact, there was an article in the paper last week which was written by a not-so-friendly editorialist about the Liberal plan. Mr Phillips in his time may take time to answer their plan. Their election platform is short about \$5 billion, let alone not addressing the what-ifs that he's created in how they're going to balance the budget.

I think that if the people of Ontario establish this element of trust and branding with a certain government style, it's clear that Ontario as a province, not to be greedy or self-centred, is a rich province, a very fortunate province in the heartland of Canada. It represents about a third of the population of Canada, but it also represents about 50% of the economy. In fact, I think we should be benevolent as a province, not in an arrogant tone. We send more money to Ottawa than we receive back, and that's referred to, as some would know, as the transfer payment inequity.

To his credit, Premier Rae mentioned that. During his staggering years in the late 1993 era, just prior to the social contract, he was saying that the federal government wasn't stepping up to it. Now we're hearing it from other provinces that are suffering with this mad cow disease out west. We're hearing other Premiers joining the call for the federal government to be there for all Canadians. In many cases, what really galls me technically is, we get Sheila Copps or somebody else giving out flags that are really being paid for by the taxpayers of Ontario and the small businesses of Ontario. When they're signing that cheque for whatever it is out in some other province, the taxpayers of Ontario quite often are the funders of that announcement.

I'd like to talk a little bit today about what we're doing to promote investor confidence in this province. As I said before, pretty much the theme of anything I'm talking about is, you have to have the right economic funda-

mentals: developing the confidence and the stable horizon line for investors to grow the economy, to add value to the activities, to add research and technology and high-value knowledge-based economy. You certainly need that kind of forward working with our universities and our colleges. I'd have to say that all of the naysayers were suggesting that the double cohort, the reforms in education about eliminating the grade 13 year that has been talked about for 10 years—this government had the courage to go forward with that.

We also had the courage to make the greatest investments in the history of Ontario in post-secondary education at the college and university levels. I can only say as a parent of five children, and of course my spouse is a teacher—Friday morning, I along with the Honourable Jim Flaherty, Janet Ecker and Jerry Ouellette—we're the members for Durham—was at Durham College and at the site of the University of Ontario Institute of Technology, the first new university in Canada in many, many years. I think it has been about 40 years since the creation of the last university in Ontario. It's this government that did this. Going back—

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton Centre): Bill Davis.

Mr O'Toole: Bill Davis started the college system some years ago. If you want to trace the history and success of this province, you need look no further than to the history of the Conservative government of this province. That's why I stand here today. There's no government that does things perfectly, but we create the climate for confidence and optimism to grow our future together and create the infrastructure, both human and physical, to create opportunities for young people.

I know that wealthy investors that we need to attract to this province are watching. While I'm proud to say that many wealthy investors have chosen to put or to keep their money in Ontario, they are not the only ones who have done so. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of individuals have also chosen our province as a smart place to invest. Every person who invests in a mutual fund that supports an Ontario company or uses an RRSP to buy a home in Ontario is making a conscious choice—as I have said before, life is about choices, and this government is prepared to make the difficult choices—a decision, if you will, that our province offers them an opportunity for growth and stability.

During our government's pre-budget consultations, people told us they wanted us to focus on several key things. One, of course, was health care; another, as I've mentioned, was education; safe and strong communities; and ensuring accountability for the tax dollars we spend on their behalf. This whole theme of accountability is becoming a driving and important theme; I think that earlier today or last week, Mr Speaker, in your remarks in the House you talked about accountability in private members' business. They told us of their concerns about investor and consumer confidence, rising insurance rates and the need for more tax cuts. Perhaps this is where the Liberals and our government differ most profoundly: in their attitude or policy toward the implications of tax cuts.

I believe, more properly and more accurately framed, it's tax policy used to stimulate or get the best results from investment or job creation opportunities. It's those policies that, when we were elected, were quite new and, I would say, not widely accepted that have proven after eight years that we have both cut taxes and increased revenue. That's what is taught in monetary policy; it's a multiplier effect. If you give someone \$100, they're probably going to spend \$1,000. If you give someone a \$100-a-month raise, and that could be in the form of a tax cut, they'll take that \$100-a-month raise and potentially buy a car or have an addition on their house. So there's a multiplier effect in putting money into the hands of taxpayers, and that multiplier effect really translates into jobs. Investors have told us they need this confidence and the tax policies I've mentioned.

People told us they are concerned about the integrity of our capital markets and the safety of their retirement savings. This is a pressing current issue when one wants to talk about pension plans and their lack of performance over the last while. There's nothing that government has done there except that those funds that were invested in technology or in the wrong sectors of the market are underperforming; there's no question about it. I think it's prudent to say there is a review of the resiliency of the pension funds, and in the few minutes left I may get a chance to say something on that.

I'm proud to say that our government listens to those concerns and responds with a budget that reflects the priorities we've heard from people and business right across Ontario.

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Our government remains committed to implementing all major investment confidence initiatives that were included in the budget measures act of 2002. These include broader rights for secondary market investors to sue. This would provide a stronger deterrent to poor disclosure practices. We're also proposing that there be no liability for investors in publicly traded income trusts for activities of the trusts or trustees. This would extend the same protections to unit-holders as are enjoyed by shareholders in business corporations and limited partners in limited partnerships.

Our government is committed to a balanced approach that protects our investors and consumers and ensures that our capital markets function efficiently. Effective capital markets are important to businesses in Ontario. They provide our businesses with capital on competitive terms so they can grow and create more jobs. We have implemented key recommendations of the minister's five-year review committee final report, *Reviewing the Securities Act (Ontario)*, which was released on May 29, 2003.

On April 7, 2003, we proclaimed the amendments to the Securities Act and the Commodity Futures Act contained in the *Keeping the Promise for a Strong Economy Act (Budget Measures)*, 2002, that were passed last December. These measures make Ontario's system the toughest in Canada and include: (1) new powers for

the Ontario Securities Commission to impose fines for securities violations and order that offenders give up their ill-gotten gains from those violations; (2) increased maximum court fines and prison terms for securities offences. Maximum court fines have increased from \$1 million to \$5 million and prison terms from two years to five years less a day; (3) increased fines for insider trading; (4) new powers for the Ontario Securities Commission to review the information that public companies provide to investors; (5) new rules and powers for the OSC that strengthen its ability to hold CEOs and CFOs accountable for the accuracy of their companies' financial statements; and (6) new powers for the OSC to make rules on the functions and responsibilities of audit companies of boards of directors of public companies.

We believe that when people invest they deserve to know that the government has set and enforced high standards so that they can make informed choices and invest with confidence. Most of these measures are supported by the five-year review committee's final report, *Reviewing the Securities Act (Ontario)*. This report has been tabled in the Legislature and I encourage all members to review it.

Given the importance of protecting investors and maintaining efficient markets, the government will form a select committee of the Legislative Assembly to review the report, consult with the public and the financial community, and report back to the government this fall. I would encourage Mr Kwinter and others who watch the market with great insight to be involved.

We have introduced new laws to strengthen our capital markets and increase consumer and investor protection so that Ontario remains competitive in the global marketplace. We have also consulted with consumers, auto industry experts and stakeholders to address the issue of rising insurance costs and put in place a strategy that will stabilize costs and improve delivery of benefits to accident victims. Rob Sampson has consulted broadly and is widely recognized as having many of the right answers to this very complex issue. We listened to the stakeholders' concerns and as a result have moved to identify and address gaps in the system for severely injured individuals, and to correct them.

We have also removed incentives for unscrupulous individuals to defraud the system by taking measures to reduce insurance fraud. We have reduced waste and duplication in the system to ensure that treatment dollars go for treatment and not for anything else. We are working with experts on improvements and we are looking for further ways to fight fraud and abuse in the system. We have consulted with consumers and listened and identified ways to improve the system. We've done this to ensure that Ontario has a competitive marketplace.

As you know, it is election today in New Brunswick, and the number one issue is auto insurance. Also coming up in the next few weeks will be the announcement of the provincial election in Nova Scotia, and it will be the number one issue. This is not unique to the Ontario marketplace; this is an issue for all Canadians.

The causes clearly are the failure in the investment climate, where the returns on premium dollars are going down, and the cost of property damage—air bags and other high-tech vehicles—is going up, and the cost of health care services, specifically soft tissue through the DACs, is going up. So there are some driving costs and some shortfalls in revenue across the country as well as the response to the reinsurance marketplace since September 11.

This government prides itself on accountability. We pride ourselves in the financial market that I've talked about, in building confident relationships with not just the taxpayers but with the province and its entire constituency.

In the few minutes I have left, I just want to mention the Financial Services Commission of Ontario. FSCO is constantly monitoring the insurance system for long-term affordability and availability. We understand that this is a compulsory product. We understand that there are pressures, that consumers—those hard-working people in Ontario like my constituents—need to have some confidence that these rates are as low as possible and yet the protections are there for them and their families in the event of a tragedy.

As I said, there has been a tightening in the reinsurance market. As a result, insurers have difficulty obtaining reinsurance from the regular book of the business. This government itself looked at it in 1995 and came in with the Automobile Insurance Rate Stability Act. I'm confident that once again we will have the right responses to a very, very important issue, and not just the capital market and the insurance market, but it's the improved services that I do believe are in the co-ops, the credit unions and other financial players in the marketplace. This government is the right partner to work with going into the future.

The Acting Speaker: Members now have up to two minutes for questions, comments.

Ms Caroline Di Cocco (Sarnia-Lambton): I'm pleased to stand up to speak about one of the consequences that the member from Durham happened to have forgotten in his presentation. It has to do with space in schools and the effect that the funding formula has had on accessibility to this public space, paid for by taxpayers' dollars.

In Barrie, the Barrie Royals is a house league basketball club with 1,200 kids who play basketball. What has happened is that the school space has gone from \$3,000 a year to \$50,000 a year. There is an inability for these organizations to utilize these already-paid-for public spaces to help the kids.

Deep River is a one-high-school town. Dr David Lee is a physicist who started this basketball program five years ago. Basketball is a low-cost entry sport. What has happened? Because of the policy of this government, the cost to utilize the space in the gym for basketball has gone from \$1,000 a year to \$10,000 a year. This team is going to end up folding because there is no other access for these kids; there is no other gym. In Collingwood, it's

gone up from \$25 to \$400 per child. The Hurricane Basketball Association in Scarborough is being limited because of the extra cost.

Those are the consequences of this government's policies. The consequences are that these spaces are less accessible. At a time when we should be dealing with physical fitness because of childhood diabetes, we have an issue here with their policies.

Ms Churley: I have to say that I listened but I didn't listen with interest, to be honest, to what the member for Durham had to say because I've heard it all before. They get up and they talk from remarks prepared, I guess, by staff in the Minister of Finance's office, but it's very selective. I suppose you could accuse us of doing the same thing: standing up for people who need a voice, people this government and the members don't talk about. They don't talk about the fact that the lower- and middle-income people of this province are falling further and further behind. In fact, the meagre tax break, if they received any at all under this government, is all used up and more as a result of higher user fees throughout the system: higher tuition costs; higher user fees; new user fees within our schools—just been talked about; more user fees across the board that parents are paying for their kids; long-term care, seniors paying more and more for rent and other needs they have.

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I find it interesting as well that the government members get up and talk about balancing the budget. Well, the budget wasn't balanced last year and it's not balanced this year either.

Ms Marilyn Mushinski (Scarborough Centre): Wrong.

Ms Churley: No, no. Listen. You see, Mr Speaker, they don't want to listen, but this is a fact. The government pocketed \$967 million from the February 2003 federal-provincial health accord for 2002-03 while only increasing health spending by \$350 million. So without that cash infusion that they took—stole—from money that desperately needed to be put into health care, to try to balance their budget—then the government said they were planning to sell off \$2.2 billion in public assets. They haven't told us what it is yet, but that's what they've got to do to balance their budget.

Ms Mushinski: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask you to rule on the allegation, that the member for Riverdale accused this side of the House of stealing. I don't believe that's parliamentary and I would ask you to rule on that, please.

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the member to perhaps withdraw that one word.

Ms Churley: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm the member for Toronto-Danforth.

I didn't accuse any members of stealing money. I said the government stole money from a health care fund to put into their general revenues to balance the budget. I don't believe that's out of order.

The Acting Speaker: I would prefer if you would withdraw it, but I understand your argument. I won't order you to do it; I will ask you.

Ms Churley: Well, in that case, because I have such respect for you, Mr Speaker, I will withdraw.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Further questions, comments? The member for—usually I'm ready for you—Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale. My apologies.

Mr Raminder Gill (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I'm happy to share in this debate. The member from Durham spoke so eloquently, as he always does. I think he's got a record for speaking in this House. When we announced the university in his region, the university of technology—because we are at the forefront of technology—I can quite understand why it was in Durham. Of course it's because of the work the member puts in. He is always putting his community at the forefront, to make sure that when the government decisions are being made, those decisions are perhaps—I'm not saying they're slanted his way, but certainly that consideration comes to mind as to where it is best to locate that. So I was quite pleased to join the member on this institute of technology, which I think the whole of Ontario will benefit from.

People talk about spaces in schools. One of the members spoke about some of these sports—utilization of school space has gone from \$2,000 to \$50,000. I'm sure it has nothing to do with inflation. That's game-playing. Be it unions, be it the boards, somebody's game-playing. Not all of a sudden does the price jump from \$2,000 to \$50,000, and similarly for basketball, from \$1,000 to \$10,000.

I'm not suggesting we should go in and start investigating, just like we had to investigate the Toronto school board when all of a sudden they said they had a \$150-million deficit. We sent Dr Rosen and the forensic accountant. He said, "None of that. The budget is balanced; in fact, there's more money in the classrooms." I think the opposition should stop this fearmongering.

Mr Bradley: The member for Durham obviously didn't have sufficient time to be able to say and lament the fact that the Minister of Public Safety and Security had \$181 million taken out of his budget this year after \$60 million was taken out last year. I know my good friend Bob Runciman has worked hard to secure that kind of funding. We have heard this government talk about how important security is in this province, but we see a loss of a full \$181 million. That's more than the budget of some ministries. I know the member for Durham would want to express his concern about that and his opposition to the Premier and the Minister of Finance taking it out of that budget. I also know he would want to support my bill on Thursday of this week—because I supported his bill; that's one reason—to end partisan government advertising by having the office of the auditor vet and approve any advertising by the government so there's no partisan tinge to it. I heard the Chair of Management Board admit a couple of weeks ago that the government has now rolled up over \$400 million in government advertising, and that's before the latest

barrage we're seeing in newspapers, on television, on the radio and in pamphlets coming to our houses.

Last, I wanted to ask the member about this, because he knows municipal politicians well: my friends who are sitting on municipal councils are beside themselves over this promise that you're not going to permit them to raise taxes without having a referendum. They are saying, "You want us to be partners in many of these projects."

There are unfortunate activities that take place, like SARS, and they may need some additional funds. All of them, to a person—Tories, Liberals, New Democrats and others—are saying this is bizarre and crazy. I want the member to comment on that.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Durham has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr O'Toole: I'll just respond to each presenter—and I appreciate them. The member from Sarnia-Lambton talked about education costs and access to gymnasiums, and I think the member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale covered what happened fairly well. You have to ask yourself, if the building is there and no one's using it, what's the problem here? People have a right to that building, in my view. So I think there's more to be said about that.

I was quite impressed that the member from Toronto-Danforth was actually talking in economic terms. It's quite surprising to see the NDP worried about a balanced budget. They have no clue what that means. But I do respect her views.

Mr Spina: That's an oxymoron.

Mr O'Toole: The member from Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale, always accurate, in his comments on my involvement—

Ms Churley: Who are you calling a moron?

Mr O'Toole: I didn't use that term. I would say that the University of Ontario Institute of Technology—all the members in that area have worked very hard, along with Bob Strickert, the chair of the board and Gary Polonsky, the president.

I'll save almost a minute for the member from St Catharines, a member I have a lot of respect for. He talked about public security and Mr Runciman's budget that's being asked to be reviewed and tightened up. I think he should call his cousins in Ottawa and ask about the \$1-billion gun registry. There's some serious waste there. Maybe they could transfer some of it to Mr Runciman to increase security on our streets. We hear it all the time.

I suppose the last couple of seconds will be the most controversial. I think the municipal referendum issue is very, very important. Speaker, I know that some day, God willing, you'll be the mayor of Hamilton—the people will decide. But that's exactly what I'm hearing. I chaired about three municipal budgets, thanks to Marie Marano, the treasurer, who taught me a great deal about tax rates, mill rates, assessment and things like that. We know that most of their budget is wages and benefits. It is a tough issue. I'm willing to listen.

The Acting Speaker: It is now time for further debate. The floor is open.

Mr Phillips: I'm pleased to join the debate on the budget. I'll start by putting a few facts before Ontarians. The first is that when the Eves government took over in 1995, the debt of the province of Ontario, according to the government's latest budget papers, was \$90.7 billion. Today it's \$111.7 billion. It's up \$21 billion. The government can't hide from that; those are the numbers they've published. And they've added 23% to the debt of the province of Ontario. I might add that in the same period of time, the federal government took the debt down by \$10 billion.

The reason I raise this is that for several years the government borrowed billions of dollars to fund tax cuts. We added \$21 billion to the debt of the province of Ontario. We're now spending, I think, \$400 million a year more in interest costs than in 1995. So when the government and Premier Eves say, "We know how to manage the finances of the province," I say firstly to the public, they've added \$21 billion to the debt of the province of Ontario, borrowed \$10 billion to fund tax cuts—the only province in the country that decided they could borrow money for tax cuts. Every other province, led by Alberta, I might add, said, "Listen, we're going to balance our books before we start cutting taxes," but not Premier Eves.

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The second point: I'd like to talk about broken promises. All of us, at least here in the Legislature, remember something called the Blueprint. In 1999, the government—Premier Eves—got elected on the basis of saying, "Listen, elect me and I'm going to cut your property tax by 20%." They were very specific. I remember the debates in my riding where they said to people, "We're going to cut your property tax by 20%. Not only that, we'll make it mandatory for owners of rental units to pass on the savings. This tax cut will put \$500 million back in the hands of individuals and families."

Mr Bradley: What happened to that promise?

Mr Phillips: My colleague said, "What happened to that promise?" They abandoned it. They simply said, "We're not going ahead with that. Sorry, we've changed our mind. I know we got elected on the basis of that. I know we promised we would cut your property tax, but we're not going to go ahead with that. We've decided that we're going to do something different."

It was just a year ago that the government abandoned \$1.5 billion of tax cuts. Before they abandoned them, someone said to me, "Do you think they'll go ahead with their tax cuts?" I said, "Absolutely, they'll go ahead with them, because they have something called the Taxpayer Protection Act, which means that they would be breaking the law if they didn't go ahead with those tax cuts that they had legislated." It wasn't just a promise; it was in legislation. It was passed by the Legislature.

As a matter of fact, a few of you may remember, I was asked on a television show, "If they break this promise, what will you do?" I said, "I'll eat my hat." Strangely enough, here in the Legislature, the then government House leader, Mr Stockwell, brought me in a hat. It was a

cake, but it was in the form of a hat, and I had to eat my hat. Why? Because I actually believed that they believed in their Taxpayer Protection Act. I thought that was one thing that they would be sure they wouldn't break. But they just say, "Nah, we can't afford it." By the way, they couldn't afford it, so they just broke the Taxpayer Protection Act. That's why my colleague from St Catharines was raising the point with the municipalities. They're telling municipalities, "Listen, if you want to raise taxes, you've got to have a referendum." But when it came to the Eves government, when they decided they were going to break the Taxpayer Protection Act, they didn't go with a referendum, they simply came here in the Legislature and said, "We're going to change the Taxpayer Protection Act."

I say to those who fought for that Taxpayer Protection Act, and the government got elected on that basis, it isn't worth the paper it's written on. At the first opportunity to break it, the government did. The public shouldn't take my word for this; this is a document that Mr Eves puts out, *On the Right Track*. What does it say here? Well, it says, "Questions and answers." First question: "How can the government justify breaking the Taxpayer Protection Act" by delaying tax cuts? That's the government's own document.

Then they said, "Well, as Moody's said, to meet the target of a fourth balanced budget, the government delayed scheduled reductions in tax rates."

I say to the public, solemn promises made by these people, "Elect us and we'll do all these tax cuts," should be taken with the same seriousness that they took them, which is not serious at all. "We simply break the Taxpayer Protection Act. If we can't afford them, we'll simply decide we're not going ahead with those tax cuts."

I say to the public—and I'll talk about the fiscal situation right now—recognize these promises for what they are. They are pre-election promises that they have, in my opinion, no opportunity to carry out.

The province used to have an AAA credit rating. In 1990, we had the top credit rating: AAA. The member for Durham talks about those days in a negative way, but in 1990 the province had a AAA credit rating, the best you could have. It was downgraded three times during the NDP. The government has now been in office for eight years. What's happened to our credit rating? It's had one upgrade. We are still two levels below where we were in 1990. We've had one upgrade.

What do the credit rating agencies say about the state of finances in the province of Ontario? The reason these people are important is that they make money by rating the creditworthiness of companies and governments. It's the basis on which interest rates are set for people who loan money to companies or to governments. As a matter of fact, a credit rating upgrade can save as much as a quarter of 1% on the interest charges.

What did the two credit rating agencies that have commented on the budget say, the budget we're debating here today where the government says, "Listen, we're

running a surplus"? DBRS, Dominion Bond Rating Service, was the first one out, and they say, "Ontario faces a DBRS adjusted deficit of \$1.9 billion in 2003-04, compared to a deficit last year of \$572 million." So one credit rating agency is saying, "Listen, the way we look at the books, the province of Ontario had a deficit last year \$572 million, and this year is going to have deficit of \$1.9 billion."

Why is that? These organizations say the government is balancing its books by doing several things. One is selling off essential assets of the province of Ontario. And when we look at the books, we don't count that as part of the operating income. It would essentially be like your family selling the home to pay for the groceries. That's what the government is doing, and DBRS says any sensible accounting will tell the people of Ontario we are running a deficit this year of \$1.9 billion.

The other rating agency that has commented is Standard and Poor's. There are three major rating agencies; Moody's has yet to comment. Standard and Poor's put their comment out on May 15. They say, "The province appears to be on track to post a deficit of roughly 1.7% of revenues in the current fiscal year, and they had a small deficit last year." So 1.7% of revenues is about \$1.2 billion. So we've got the two credit rating agencies that have looked at the province's finances. If you want to use real accounting, and if you want to have an accurate assessment of the state of finances of the province of Ontario, both the rating agencies are saying that we are running a deficit. And both, by the way, are indicating that next year is more serious than this year—both of them.

I say to the public, here we are after eight years and the credit rating of the province of Ontario is still two levels below where it was in 1990, costing us tens of millions of dollars of increased interest costs. The two independent organizations that have commented on the finances of the province of Ontario say we're running a deficit of probably close to \$2 billion.

The next point I'd like to make is that I think in some respects the situation may be worse than either of these two rating agencies has indicated. Last week, the Minister of Finance was at what we call estimates to explain the finances of the province and acknowledged these things about the finances for this year. Firstly, she and Premier Eves are planning to sell \$2.2 billion of assets. She could not name what those are—and here we are, well into the fiscal year. Some \$2.2 billion worth of assets—that's huge; unheard of.

The only time the province has ever seen anything like that was when the 407 was sold. Highway 407 was sold May 5, 1999. When was the last election called? May 5, 1999. The 407 delivered a cheque down here for a profit of \$1.6 billion. And why was there a profit? Because they sold the highway for 99 years and they put no controls on the tolls. The poor 407 users are going to be ripped off for 99 years. That's why we are so suspicious of this \$2.2-billion asset sale, because the last time we saw a number like this, the people of Ontario were really, really ripped off.

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There is \$850 million in increased spending on SARS that was not accounted for when the rating agencies looked at our finances. This is new money, \$850 million. There is \$800 million in savings in the budget. There is this line: "We're going to find \$800 million in savings." Normally, that number is \$200 million or \$300 million. But there's \$800 million, and I say to the people of Ontario, the government won't identify any of that \$800 million—and if, after eight years of being in government, there's \$800 million in savings simply lying around, what have they been doing for the last eight years? It's a phony number, frankly, \$800 million in savings in the budget.

Finally, there's \$800 million in federal money in the budget that is available only if the federal government runs a surplus of \$6 billion. The way it works is, the federal government has said, "If we run a surplus of \$6 billion, we will take \$2 billion and allocate it to the provinces for health care. But we've got to run a \$6-billion surplus. Frankly, I think that's somewhat problematic. The economy is without question slower than anyone had anticipated. Yet the government has put \$770 million in federal money in here that's available only with that \$6-billion surplus.

The reason I raise these things is that the government is once again thinking they are going to get themselves elected by promising unaffordable tax cuts that will only be found to be unaffordable after the election. The proof of it is this: first, they still haven't delivered either of two major promises made in 1999—in fact, they've cancelled one completely; second, they had to abandon the Taxpayer Protection Act just a few months ago. The reason they did that, by their own admission, was to balance the books because they couldn't afford the tax cut.

The minister confirmed at estimates, "Yes, indeed, those numbers are correct. We have \$2.2 billion of asset sales, unidentified; we have \$850 million of new spending on SARS that was not identified anywhere in the budget; yes, we have to find \$800 million worth of savings, none of it identified; and yes, we've got \$770 million of federal money as revenue that will only be available if the federal government runs a surplus of \$6 billion."

So I say to the public, you're going to be faced with a promise soon: "We're going to be able to maintain our health care spending and our education spending, we're going to be able to sell \$2.2 billion worth of assets, we're going to find \$850 million for SARS money that's not in the budget, we're going to find \$800 million of savings, none of which has been identified, and we're going to book \$770 million of federal money that's available only with a \$6-billion surplus—and we're going to give you these tax cuts."

For the life of me, I don't understand why the province of Ontario needs to have corporate taxes 25% below the US. That's one of the key promises of this government: "We want our corporate taxes to be 25% lower than our competitors in the US." I say we in this province have to fund our health care system in a way

that's different from our competitors. As a matter of fact, the government says that if you're a manufacturer in Ontario, it costs you \$2,500 less for health coverage in Ontario than it does in Michigan. Why is that? There's no magic to it. It's because we have chosen in the province and in this country, all of us together to share in the cost of health. How does that happen? It's because we've chosen, through our taxes, to pay for our health care system. Yet our corporations are going to find corporate taxes 25% below the US—at enormous cost to all of us. I have no difficulty with our taxes—we've got to be competitive to sustain our economy. But 25% below the US? Just Ontario's portion of that is \$2.2 billion.

Another big promise they think they're going to get elected on is they're going to give \$500 million to private schools. Again, for the life of me, I don't understand, when our public schools are starved for resources—and believe me, they are starved for resources. I thought former Premier Davis made a very statesmanlike speech the other day in defence of public education. But here we are in this budget proceeding with \$500 million for private schools.

There is a brand new proposal in here to send cheques out to seniors for the education portion of their taxes. I just say, what it's going to mean is a \$20,000 or \$30,000 cheque going out to someone like Ted Rogers or Frank Stronach. It's done deliberately to try and buy an election.

The member for Durham talks about the success they've had with tax cuts. I say to the people of Ontario, recognize this: \$21 billion added to the debt of the province because we borrowed \$10 billion for tax cuts in those early years. They still haven't delivered on the tax cut promises they made in 1999 during that election, and they had to break the Taxpayer Protection Act just a few months ago because Ontario couldn't afford it. The people of Ontario are wise when it comes to understanding promises that can't be kept, and they'll hold this government accountable.

The member for Durham talked about laying out for the people of Ontario the province's financial plans. Well, I'll just say that this is a document our party put out. We laid out for the next four years our fiscal plan, revenues and expenses. We engaged a forensic auditor to look at all of our spending, and that particular individual worked I think 80 hours, looking at our spending estimates. We got two of the best economists in Ontario to look at our total plan. They've all said, "Listen, the numbers are accurate. They can do it. Their numbers add up."

I will say to Premier Eves, we have yet to see anything from him except for the next 10 months. We have not seen the next two years, three years or four years. I challenge them to come forward. It was just the other day when I said to the Minister of Finance, "Listen, all we've got from you for next year is one number. Will you please give us some evidence of your revenue forecast?" Nothing. Nothing at all.

I'm pleased in this relatively short period of time to comment on the government's budget plans, to say that

perhaps one of the best indicators is the two independent credit agencies, both of which have said, "You've got problems. You're running a deficit already this year." As a matter of fact, one indicates that maybe they can solve their problems by delaying them: "The province ought to delay further tax cuts beyond January 1, 2004," warning us that they can't deliver their plans. So I say to the people of Ontario, be wary. I've seen them break their promises before.

The Acting Speaker: Members now have up to two minutes for questions or comments.

Ms Churley: This will be my only opportunity to speak today, in these two minutes, because of the changes to the rules. We have fewer and fewer opportunities to speak in this Legislature to these very important bills.

I do want to say that I'm glad the member for Scarborough-Agincourt has raised the Taxpayer Protection Act once again, because the government is trying to have it both ways. On one hand, when we complain about all the people who have been left out of their budget who badly need assistance and help, this government gets up and says they give tax cuts to people and that will help them, as though that's going to help the disabled who badly need an increase and all the low-income workers that we gave minimum wage increases to, I think pretty well every year when we were in government.

1700

May I say that anybody can govern in good times. I shudder to think what would have happened to the most vulnerable people in this province had this gang been in government during the worst recession we've had here since the 1930s. As you well know, Mr Speaker—you were there—it was agony to try to determine how to best support those most vulnerable people in our society in a very bad recession. The irony is that had we been re-elected in good economic times, which this government benefited from, we would have paid down the deficit faster than they did. They tend to ignore that.

But the interesting thing about the Taxpayer Protection Act is that they can't keep up with it—they are breaking their own law—but now they're going to impose that on our municipalities. Can you believe that? At the same time that they're telling the city of Toronto, for instance, that they can hire more police but they'd have to hold referendums and adhere to the Taxpayer Protection Act, at the same time our public health system is not getting enough money, they're going to impose that same act on them. Shame.

Mr O'Toole: I did take time to leave the chamber and watch the debate of the member for Scarborough-Agincourt on the television so I could get a clear picture of what was being said. As I suspected—and that's why I had to pay close attention—it was fraught with severe weaknesses in terms of explaining. I only have a certain amount of time to explain one of the fundamental errors where his premise—if I can prove one of them is wrong, you could conclude by that that they're all wrong.

He should know that in 1995, when we were elected, there was an \$11-billion-plus deficit. That's 20% of spending. Any government that had to stop the deficit in one year would have created a very serious problem for the people of Ontario. We chose to take three years, so we did accumulate additional debt.

I challenge him to look at his election document, which I have a copy of. They were never going to balance the budget, and I put to you that they never will balance the budget. I think he should stick to the fundamentals and explain his platform, which is seriously flawed by about \$5 billion. It's his turn to explain. He's had the time.

As opposition, they don't have any responsibility directly in terms of governing the province except to criticize, and he's done a fair amount of that. But I ask him to ask his cousins as well where the federal government is on all of the issues facing the people of Ontario. The people of Ontario are concerned, as they should be. I can assure you that Minister Clement, the Minister of Health, has the issues well in hand, but SARS didn't come in in a car or a boat across Lake Ontario. It came in through an airport. Those are regulated by the federal government. Mad cow disease is completely regulated federally. Where are they on that? West Nile didn't come into Ontario without first being in other places. That is again the federal government. They're not up to the job. They never were, they still aren't, and I think this budget clearly demonstrates they don't even understand.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): I'd like to thank the member for Scarborough-Agincourt for his usual careful analysis of the finances of the province of Ontario. There's no member in this House who's more credible to talk about the finances of Ontario than the member for Scarborough-Agincourt. He provides insight, an objective point of view, gives you careful analysis and gives you the straight goods, the truth. Let me underline "the truth."

It is with amazement, I guess, that the people of Ontario find out that the Harris-Eves government, who consider themselves to be such good financial managers, added \$21 billion to the debt of this province. That's a 23% increase in the debt of this province, \$21 billion. I'm sure the people of Ontario are amazed that the Harris-Eves government, the same ones who consider themselves to be such good financial managers, borrowed \$10 billion to give tax cuts to the richest in this province.

I'm sure it's no surprise to the people of Ontario that the Harris-Eves government has broken many of its promises. Let me talk about two in particular that have a severe impact on northern Ontario.

On November 21, Ernie Eves promised the people of Sudbury and northeastern Ontario that he would allocate \$100 million for the paving of Highway 69 from Sudbury to Parry Sound, the first portion. Well, I'm looking through the budget and I don't see that \$100 million allocated for the paving of Highway 69 from Sudbury to Parry Sound.

Of course, the Northern Ontario Medical School, that school that was supposed to open in 2004—another broken promise—is not going to be opening now until 2005.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Now the member from Scarborough-Agincourt has up to two minutes to respond.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Hang on. One, two, three—I stand corrected. My apologies. There is one more response available. The member for Niagara Centre now has the floor.

Mr Kormos: I've been eager to respond to the comments by Mr Phillips, but while waiting for my opportunity to do this, I've had to listen to Conservative backbenchers. Exactly whom is their budget serving? Whose interests are being accommodated?

Certainly not those of college and university students, whose tuition has increased by over 150% since 1995. This Tory budget not only tolerates but encourages tuition fees of \$20,000, \$21,000, \$22,000, tuition fees alone of \$20,000-plus. This government has no commitment to reducing those fees, but promises more deregulation of university and college tuitions. This government has kept the minimum wage suppressed at \$6.85 an hour for the last eight years. That makes it out to around 5 bucks an hour now. There is little relief for college and university students who can find those minimum wage jobs.

You see, the problem is that when I was kid going to college and university, like you, Speaker, students took those minimum wage jobs. Now it's their parents doing those minimum wage jobs because this government, over the course of eight years, has seen the deindustrialization of Ontario become a reality, whether it's in the north with mills and mines, whether it's down where we come from in Hamilton-Niagara, industries such as Fleet manufacturing down in Fort Erie, paper mills shutting down in Niagara as well as the north, steel mills losing production and losing jobs—Atlas Steel, Welland, and Slater Steel filing for bankruptcy protection as a result of, among other things, the incredible increase in electricity costs to industrial electricity users.

We are no longer competitive. The Tories have taken us down deep into that descent of joblessness and despair.

The Acting Speaker: I thank the member again for his assistance in getting me to count to four without screwing it up.

Now the member for Scarborough-Agincourt has up to two minutes.

Mr Phillips: I'm pleased to respond to the responses.

To the member from Durham, again, I'd just use the comments from the rating agencies. Here's what Standard and Poor's says: "Although part of the deterioration in the province's budgetary balance can be explained by cyclical factors, Standard and Poor's views the government's recent use of planned asset sales as being inconsistent with its stated objectives to take the necessary

steps to balance the budget.” Standard and Poor’s is saying, “Listen, in our opinion, there’s a deficit here in the province of probably about \$1.2 billion.”

DBRS, the Dominion Bond Rating Service, says the deficit is \$1.9 billion. As I said earlier in my remarks, they go on to say,

“Despite government optimism, balancing next year’s budget will likely pose challenges.

“Revenue growth is likely to slow markedly as a result of the tax cuts planned for January 2004....”

I say to the member for Durham, we in the Liberal Party have put out our numbers. We’ve said, “Here’s our four-year plan.” We’ve subjected them to two very senior economists. The chief economist at Scotiabank said, “After examining the program details, I believe that it is a workable plan for our province.”

The government has put out nothing. All we have is this year’s plan and one number for next year. They refuse to let the people of Ontario see how they’re going to fund all their promises. In my opinion, and in the opinion of many, it’s just like this year’s budget. Frankly, it doesn’t hold together.

Finally, I’d say to the member for Durham that I’m a little bit worried about the job situation. The unemployment rate in the province of Ontario in the year 2000 was 5.7%; in 2001, 6.3%; in 2002, 7.1%. Job creation in the first five months of this year has been extremely weak. I’m sorry to say that I think we’ve got some challenges ahead.

1710

The Acting Speaker: The floor is open for further debate. I recognize the member for Brampton Centre.

Mr Spina: Thank you, Speaker. I hope you enjoy your few remaining days in the chair and in the House. You made a statement earlier today that we applauded. You’ve been a major contributor to this Legislative Assembly in your posts and various positions that you indicated. We wish you well in the future.

I was here a short while, from 1995-99, when we as the caucus rump from the PCs, as we were known, were sitting in the corner next to the NDP. I always remember when you would get up and do your very loud, very eloquent and very hard-hitting criticism of the government. I think one of your favourite expressions was, “anti-union, anti-worker government.” I remember counting them one day and after you sat down I suggested that you were slipping. You couldn’t understand what my question was and I clarified it for you. I said, “You only accused us of being anti-worker, anti-union four times; usually it’s about six or seven.” This may be the only opportunity that I will publicly have to say to you, Speaker, that we wish you well and thank you for your contribution to government in this province.

Back to the issue: today we’re talking about the budget. The focus often tends to be more on the process than the content. I know the member from Welland kept referring to this as a contemptuous budget, full of contempt. I say that it’s nonsense, because it’s traditional—I like to use a little bit of a pun and call it “vintage whine.”

I call it “vintage whine” because whenever the opposition doesn’t have the opportunity to come right up front and get equal time to criticize whatever the government is doing—which is their job—we hear vintage whine. I think we’ve heard no more vintage whine than this, than over the process of how and where the budget was delivered, when in fact the only people that complained were the opposition and the press.

My God, the press was just unbelievable in their whine. Why? Because they didn’t have their cushy, free offices in the Legislature to do their reports from; they didn’t have their free parking spaces outside of this Legislative Assembly to be able to come here and set up all of their nice equipment and draw on the paid-for-by-the-Legislative-Assembly broadcast services, to be able to cover it all for nothing for them and provide them with the feed. What a vintage whine.

Mr Bartolucci: What does “CBC” stand for?

Mr Spina: I don’t know what your problem is, but I bet it’s hard to pronounce.

So you had this vintage whine from the media because they had to go out, set up and do things.

The member for Welland was mentioning how, “I’m sure Mr Stronach somehow got hundreds of thousands of dollars out of this.”

Mr Kormos: Three point five million dollars, Joe.

Mr Spina: Three point five. I don’t know where he gets that number. I really would be interested to see the source of that number, because Mr Stronach, I found, was amazing—

Mr Kormos: I heard it on the CBC.

Mr Spina: Well, yeah; that figures.

Mr Stronach was actually a Liberal candidate. They never stopped to think that one of the elements of the budget had to do with apprenticeship programs, and what better place to deliver a budget than in an environment that really espoused the epitome of private sector apprenticeship programs for what is the largest industry in our province, and that is the automotive industry?

There are a number of things that people wanted us to address in this budget, and I place the emphasis on the content of the budget. That is what people in my riding say to me. They are interested in what is in a budget and how it affects them, not where it’s presented. Frankly, that was only the speech, because we know that the actual budget papers themselves were filed with the Clerk’s office. The reality is that people don’t care where it’s delivered; they care about how it affects them. “How much money is it going to cost me out of my pocket?” or “Am I going to get it back?” That’s what people are interested in. “Is the government going to be able to provide for health care or education or transportation services?” That’s what the public is interested in; not the fact that it was presented as a symbolic gesture in a parts plant that trains apprentices, probably better than most other places anywhere in this province, for one of our most important industries, the automotive industry.

There are things that people in Ontario told us they wanted to see in this year’s budget. They wanted to see

tax cuts to promote growth and job creation, they wanted to see accountability for the dollars that are spent and they wanted to see continued investment in priority areas like health care and education.

On March 27, Minister Ecker introduced the budget that delivered on each and every one of these priorities. She said at the time, speaking directly to the people of Ontario:

“You told me that health care and education are your most important priorities; that your children and grandchildren need high standards and resources in school to succeed; that you require quality health care, when and where you need it, to stay well and get well.

“You told me that continued tax relief is important not just because it rewards individual initiative by leaving more money in your pocket to spend, save or invest, but because you recognize that lower taxes attract and keep jobs here.

“You spoke about how our young people need more opportunities for post-secondary education, for skills training and apprenticeships”—there it is, folks—“and about your concerns for your parents’ and grandparents’ ability to live independently in their own homes.

“You made it clear that strong communities require roads, transit, and safe and clean water.

“You told me that you wish governments were more accountable for the way they spend your tax dollars because you are often skeptical about whether the results are meeting the priorities.

“While it is never possible to meet every need, this budget reflects your priorities.”

Today, let me focus on some of the commitments to health care. We know that everywhere we go today we hear people talking about health care. From the water cooler to the call-in show, it is often the number one topic on people’s minds, and with good reason. We all need health care at various points in our lives and, as Minister Ecker so effectively pointed out, when and where we need it.

I will say—and I think I may have mentioned this in the past—I don’t know if there is anyone who appreciates more than me the fact that we have a government-funded health care system. I am an individual who, at the age of 11, had to experience surgery near the heart at Toronto General, when we were living in Sault Ste Marie. We didn’t have OHIP in 1957 and it cost my father a year’s salary. By today’s standards, that’s not a whole lot, but if we look at the fact that it was a year’s salary to pay for that surgery for his 11-year-old son, it had a significant impact on the finances and economics of the family, especially when there were still two other children.

In 1972, I had open-heart surgery. I will say that I was very pleased and relieved, of course, that it was completely covered by OHIP, at Toronto General once again. I appreciated the fact that I received the health care I needed, when I needed it and when the doctors recommended it. They made sure that I had the surgery that allowed me to live beyond the age of 26, which is what the age was at that point. I am now, 30 years later, very

proud of the fact that I’m able to be here. The Lord kept me on this earth for a reason. The congenital cardiac clinic at Toronto General Hospital still continues to function on a very strong, relevant basis, and I give credit to Dr Gary Webb and all of the staff at the unit, where I was in fact a week and a half ago for a complete check-up. I went through the SARS screening process to get in and out of the hospital. I want to say that the system worked, and it worked well. I want to give credit to our doctors, nurses and the other staff technicians and support people at all of the hospitals in Ontario, but particularly in Toronto, where they are on the front line of the SARS issue.

1720

We have to think of health care in terms of those doctors and nurses that are available, how many hospitals are being built or renovated, or how crowded the doctor’s waiting room might be. We mustn’t diminish these issues because they are important, and I know that it’s easy to remind the members of this House of some of the lessons we have learned from our experience with SARS. Before this year, who had ever heard of severe acute respiratory syndrome? It really was something that was unknown. The answer was that no one in this province really knew or was aware of what SARS is—either in this country or anywhere else. The reality was that it virtually did not exist. But I challenge anyone here today or watching at home to find a colleague, friend or loved one who didn’t know about SARS after it hit. Many of us now know someone first-hand who perhaps has been affected, even if it’s on a quarantine basis. Even in Brampton, I know we had a couple of paramedics who worked for Toronto services that were self-quarantined at home—and that included their children—in order to make sure that it didn’t spread beyond the sources.

SARS has had a profound effect on the way we look at health care and on our economy. Although March and April were difficult months, May was more encouraging. Unfortunately it resurfaced again. However, the good news is that the numbers are now on the decline. As I said earlier, health care is about doctors, nurses, hospitals and much more. It’s about early detection, prevention, shorter waiting lists, increasing access to technology, better support for mental health and a stronger focus on keeping people well.

Our 2003 budget addressed this complex mix of factors. Some of the commitments in the 2003-04 budget that are of interest to the people of Ontario are: we’ll invest a total budget of \$28.1 billion in health care, including both program and capital expenditures. That investment represents a \$1.9-billion increase in funding from the previous, 2002-03, budget year, which was \$26.2 billion. Where is this \$1.9-billion going: \$10.4 billion for operation of hospitals, including \$130 million one-time funding for diagnostic and medical equipment; \$6.7 billion for OHIP payments to physicians, other practitioners, commercial laboratories and primary care centres; \$3.7 billion to enhance support to long-term-care facilities and community services; and \$2.3 billion for

increased utilization in Ontario drug programs—that represents that increase over the past few years; \$4.5 billion will fund other operating programs, such as Cancer Care Ontario, public health services, emergency health services, Canadian Blood Services; and \$504 million more for health capital investments.

Dr Bette Stephenson, Chair of the Ontario Innovation Trust, and Dr Cal Stiller, Chair of the Ontario Research and Development Challenge Fund, will now chair the new Cancer Research Institute of Ontario. They will co-ordinate the effort to expand and strengthen our research capability by attracting top researchers to the province and keeping the best of our promising scientists right here in Ontario.

The government proposed increased tax support for individuals with disabilities and those caring for infirm dependent relatives, in recognition of the financial changes they face. We travelled with our finance committee and did pre-budget consultations. As chair of that committee, I heard requests from various sources and for assistance the public wanted, in various ways, to address their particular needs. We heard from people who care for infirm or dependent relatives and some of the financial challenges they face. We tried to address that by giving them some tax credits that can leave them with a bit more disposable income to be able to help dependants who are living with them.

Some details on the package of initiatives—this system provides assistance to individuals themselves with disabilities or infirmities, as well as the relatives who help care for them. The care provided by individuals for an infirm spouse or common-law partner goes unrecognized by the current income tax system, as do the efforts of adult children to help their infirm parents or grandparents with modest incomes to remain in their own home.

Three enhancements are proposed to these credits that would take effect January 1, 2003—retroactive to January this year, and of course effective for this tax year when you file next year—subject to us getting the budget through:

First, the amounts to which these tax credits are based would be increased to \$6,637;

Secondly, the budget proposes to expand the caregiver credit and the infirm dependant credit to include spouses or common-law partners who are dependent by reason of mental or physical infirmity and provide support to more caregivers living apart from dependent relatives;

Thirdly, the dependant's income level at which the caregiver credit and infirm dependant credit are reduced would be raised to \$13,050 and both credits would be eliminated when the dependant's income reaches \$19,687.

This increased tax support will provide annual benefits of \$50 million to about 165,000 family caregivers and people with disabilities in this province, providing them with an average saving of about \$300 each. That's significant to people particularly on a fixed income.

More funding has also been committed to helping children with autism and their families with increased

support, and we're looking to increase some of these other services.

We had a number of specific initiatives in health care. Some of the communities that benefited directly from those health care commitments out of this budget are: \$194 million for the London Health Sciences Centre; \$132 million for the Thunder Bay Regional Hospital; \$115 million for the Ottawa hospital—I'm looking for the cuts; where are the cuts?—\$89 million for the Kitchener-Waterloo Grand River Hospital; \$17 million for the Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital—where are the cuts?—\$38 million for the Northumberland Health Care Corporation; \$64 million for the Windsor Regional Hospital, metropolitan site—where are the cuts?—186 new and 184 redeveloped long-term-care beds at the Davy home in my home of Sault Ste Marie—an increase; where are the cuts?—160 new long-term-care beds in the town of Kingsville; 200 new long-term-care beds at the Yee Hong Centre in Markham. Where are the cuts? We've improved access to health care services with 20,000 new long-term-care beds coming on stream by 2004, plus an additional 16,000 beds being renovated to bring them up to standard. These are investments, solid investments, from the budget. There aren't any cuts here.

1730

The Acting Speaker: Members now have up to two minutes for questions or comments.

Mr Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): I'm pleased to follow the member from Brampton Centre, who I think was attempting to speak from his heart and saying what he believes to be the truth. But he posed a series of rhetorical references to the cuts: "Where are the cuts?" I think if we heard that once, we must have heard that four or five times.

I want to tell you that we hear a lot of stories out in my part of the world about the bells in hospitals being rung at 3 o'clock in the morning and not having enough nurses on staff to respond. We've heard a lot in our community, when the visiting homemakers were allowed to go down the tubes, go bankrupt because this government changed the rules around home care and left some 7,500 of our vulnerable people stranded for a period of several weeks, some of whom had to move from their home into those long-term-care facilities. Thank goodness the long-term-care facilities are there. But given a choice, people would prefer to see those programs funded so that their first choice, staying in their home, could be realized.

Where are the cuts? The cuts are in the SAM program up in Ancaster, which was funded through a Trillium grant with the specific understanding that the Ministry of Health would come through with long-term funding. That was dumped, and there were some 67 or so seniors left vulnerable there.

Where are the cuts? You say this government wants to see the best researchers in the world here in North America. I guess that doesn't apply if you're an infectious disease specialist. Remember those cuts? You remember them, the five infectious disease specialists who were released a while back?

Where are the cuts? I suggest the honourable member look at youth treatment centres, drug and alcohol programs and some of the mental health facilities that are struggling because of the very cuts you rhetorically ask where they are. I'll tell you, they're out there, and those who have ears to hear and eyes to see should be listening and looking at the real impact of this government's programs.

Mr Kormos: Well, the member may be right. Mr Stockwell didn't see any cuts to the expense account that enabled him to travel to Rome and Paris and London and Glasgow in the highest levels of luxury at the taxpayers' expense. Nobody clipped his wings when he billed \$27,000 worth of tickets, airfare alone—27 grand in tickets. Nobody clipped Mr Stockwell's wings when he was camping out in \$500-a-night hotel rooms in Rome and Paris and London. Nobody was clipping Mr Stockwell's wings when he was being toured around in what was surely, at \$10,000 for a week, a Rolls-Royce or something of similar ilk. Nobody told Mr Stockwell that, taking what ended up to be a vacation to the tune of \$40,000 or \$50,000 at taxpayers' expense. Nobody clipped his wings. Nobody cut his style. Nobody cut his fashion statement as he strolled down the Champs Élysées of Paris or dined at expensive bistros in the Latin Quarter or on the left bank or visited Harrods to bring back some of those scented soaps for the Minister of Labour, the fellow with the expensive towels—

Mrs Leona Dombrowsky (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Brad Clark.

Mr Kormos: That's right—so that after the Minister of Labour, Mr Clark, bathed himself with these Parisian scented soaps after a sweaty day in cabinet, he could towel himself off with these Egyptian, 100% combed cotton, plush towels being paid for by the taxpayer. Those are the kind of cuts we were looking for, quite frankly.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Scarborough Centre.

Ms Mushinski: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I too am very pleased to join in this debate this afternoon, and also wish to congratulate you for the exemplary job you have done in the chair. I certainly join with my colleague from Brampton Centre in recognizing that and congratulating you for that, Mr Speaker.

Notwithstanding that I have rather a lot of reading material here on my desk, I have been listening quite intently to this discussion this afternoon. I guess it is the nature of the opposition to oppose and to criticize, but it's really interesting that they always conveniently forget the 10 lost years. They talk about cuts, but I guess one has to be reminded, as has been suggested by my colleague from Brampton Centre, of those 10 lost years in terms of increases, not cuts. They were tax increases; there were close to 70 tax increases.

When we talk about cuts, I guess we can say, "Yes, the number of jobs in this province indeed was cut as taxes were increased." I for one can remember the commercial concentration tax, which was a huge tax increase

and a burden imposed on municipalities, certainly within the GTA, that actually drove jobs away. So when my honourable friend from Brampton Centre speaks about this government and the tax decreases, they have led to significant increases in expenditures on health care and education, the kinds of services we would expect to protect.

Mr Mario Sergio (York West): I just want to compliment the member from Brampton Centre for bringing back to us some of the old announcements we keep hearing from the government on a day-to-day basis. I would mention to the member and to the government side as well to follow up with action the announcements they keep making.

The budget is the most important document and really contains the will and the ways the government wants to govern the province and its citizens for the next short while.

Let me take you back for a minute to the now infamous Bill 26—I'm sure you remember very well. I think a lot of what we're seeing today started with that foundation, that infamous Bill 26. We have seen the dismantling, if you will, of the Common Sense Revolution because of Bill 26. But the effects are still here today, and we have to ask ourselves, "If they have increased funding in practically every department, as they say, especially the best, the biggest, the most important ones—health care, education, the environment and so forth—if they have infused so many other hundreds of millions of dollars, then how come we are worse off today in every particular department than we were eight, nine, 10 years ago?" What happened? Something is not coinciding. Either they have made the announcement and the money has not been flowing, or the problem is the accountability is completely wrong.

Mr Speaker, I hope to continue when I get my five or 10 minutes on this, but I want to compliment the member from Brampton Centre on his presentation.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Brampton Centre now has up to two minutes to respond.

1740

Mr Spina: Thank you to all the members for their comments. The member from Niagara Centre has a career in art, I know, because he paints such an amazing picture from dastardly deeds of the other people. I guess he didn't cut such a striking pose as a Sunshine Boy many years ago, which got him in trouble. But that's all right; that's history now.

My friend from York West says, "Look around you, folks. This province is worse in every sector than it was when this government took office." I would directly challenge that 150%, because in 1995, we made a bunch of commitments and we came out with a series of promises. This was the only party in modern history that virtually delivered every promise that we had in the 1995 Common Sense Revolution, and we followed through with the 1999 election campaign. I remind the members opposite: this is the first government with back-to-back majority governments since John Robarts.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener Centre): And why?

Mr Spina: Because we delivered on what we promised, and that's what people remember. I remember in 1995 people saying to me, "Hell, if you deliver half of this, I'll vote for you again." In 1999, they said, "Holy cow, we didn't think you guys would really do it, but you did. You can count on my support once again."

When I listed off the number of investments in health care, they weren't commitments that are coming; many of them were already spent and implemented for this year. So not empty promises: we deliver.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex): I welcome the opportunity to have a few words in the debate on this motion today. I remind those who are perhaps watching at home that the motion reads, "That this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government." Well, I'm afraid I can't do that, and I might as well say that at the outset. The folks at home look at some of these issues in a very simple way. I know we talk about billions of dollars; we talk about hundreds of millions of dollars like it's something we spend every day. That's a lot of money. They think about that money, but they also think about how the government of the day can afford to spend that kind of money. How do they arrive at the kind of money they're going to spend, and how do they decide how they're going to spend this money?

During the winter break, I had the opportunity to visit the Arner Stop, a coffee shop in my riding, on many occasions, or go to the Country Cafe in Cottam and sit around and have a coffee. I get asked those questions. So when we were off during the break, I said, "Well, what will happen is, we'll go back into session somewhere in the middle of March, we'll continue on until the end of June, and the government will carry out its business." As we all know, that didn't happen. The Premier decided to prorogue, or end the session.

Then I was asked, "Bruce, what do we do now? What happens now?" I said, "What will happen is the Premier will decide when the Legislature is to reconvene, and at that time they will present a speech from the throne that will lay out in a general way what the government's plans are. And following that will be a budget that will support those plans." We know that went astray this time too. We didn't come back and have a budget; we had a budget up in a car parts plant somewhere—a so-called budget. Quite frankly, I shared the view of many of those in my constituency that it was an opportunity for public relations. Nevertheless, the government called it a budget and they had books that had all kinds of figures to tell us how they were going to spend their money.

They said, "Well, what happened to the throne speech that's supposed to come before the budget?" I said, "This time, we're going to have a throne speech after the budget, because the government said in The Promise of Ontario that they went out to seek the advice of the citizens of the province of Ontario. 'What do you want us to put in the throne speech? What's your vision? What do

you see as the future of Ontario?' But," I said, "that's kind of difficult because they've already said what they're going to spend the money on. In my view, they've got the cart before the horse." Many of the people in rural Ontario, who understand what it means to put the cart before the horse, understood that, that it's awfully difficult to lay out the vision and ask people how they want their money spent when you've already decided how you're going to spend their money. So that raised some confusion in their minds.

Then, when we did get the figures that the government was interested in using as part of its budget, some of us waited to hear what others had to say. So that we would not be too presumptuous, we were interested in what third parties had to say.

Here's what Standard and Poor's says about the Ernie Eves budget in deficit. May 15: "The venerable Standard and Poor's today joined the chorus of banks and credit rating agencies reporting the Ernie Eves government is running a major deficit." All I had to do was point out to those at the Arner Stop or the Country Kitchen that experts are saying the great management government of this past eight years is running a major deficit. My constituents said, "How can that be? They stand up and tell us that they are the money managers. In fact, they're not even the government; they came to fix government. What a way to fix it," the folks at home said, "to run a deficit."

I quote from Standard and Poor's. "Standard and Poor's expects the province to post an overall deficit of 1.7% of operating revenues in fiscal 2004 ... following a modest overall deficit of 0.1% of revenues in fiscal 2003," the formidable credit rating agency said in a release. "Well," the folks said, "that doesn't sound like very much, 1.7%, 0.1%." When you translate it into dollars for the folks at home and say, "You know, that represents \$2.2 billion that this government is going to have to find somewhere," the folks at home say, "That's easy. They'll tell you where they're going to find that kind of money, won't they? That's what we have to do on our farms. That's what we have to do in our businesses. That's what we have to do in our municipalities."

So we come and ask the Minister of Finance, "Where are you going to find \$2.2 billion? What are you going to sell?" She couldn't tell us, or wouldn't tell us. I'm not sure which is the case, but I do know she wouldn't tell us. The folks back at home all say, "How can that be? How could I on my farm, for example, say that I'm going to just sell some of the assets? We won't deal in billions, because on the farm you can only deal in thousands of dollars, but how am I going to get, say, \$22,000? What assets am I going to sell? I have to decide what I can do without or what I think my family can do without." This confuses the folks at home. It really confuses them.

Then they say to me, "I understand the government's going to find savings, and that's good. The government's going to find \$800 million in savings." That's when it becomes a lot of money to the folks at home. They say, "Eight hundred million dollars, if they're going to cut

civil service staff, is a lot of staff. What kind of services are we going to lose? If they're going to start looking in some major areas like health care, education and areas where they've cut before, like the environment, or where they cut \$181 million out of the budget in safety and security," the folks at the Arner Stop say, "I'm not so sure that we can do without those services. I think it's incumbent on the government"—although "incumbent" is a pretty big word. We don't talk about those kinds of things at home. We just think, "I think it's the government's job to tell us where they're going to save that \$800 million." Are we going to have to pay for more, like we have since the last time they cut, and give tax cuts to big corporations? Are we going to have to pay more for our services? Are our Drive Clean costs going to go up when we go to get our car checked? Is that going to be a grab they're going to make? Or is there some other area that has been government services where we're now going to have to pay \$25, \$30 or \$40, or an additional \$25, \$30 or \$40?

Those are the questions that are asked at home. Those are the questions that I'd like to be able to answer to my constituents, but unfortunately the answers haven't been given by this government. Where are we going to get a couple of billion dollars in the sale of assets? I have to tell them, "I don't know." The government won't help me answer that question. Where are we going to have \$800 million in savings? I have to tell the folks at home, "I don't know."

But I tell the folks at home this: when they don't come clean with you, when they don't start to tell you those kinds of things, then I'm a little concerned about what they aren't telling us and what it really might mean for us. Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: I appreciate the member ending on that note, because he well knows that the standing orders require me now to put the question.

Therefore, on Wednesday, May 21, 2003, Mrs Ecker moved, seconded by Mr Eves, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Is it the pleasure of the House that Mrs Ecker's motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please indicate by saying "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1752 to 1802.

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

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Newman, Dan
Baird, John R.	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Cameron	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Beaubien, Marcel	Johns, Helen	Runciman, Robert W.
Chudleigh, Ted	Johnson, Bert	Sampson, Rob
Clark, Brad	Kells, Morley	Spina, Joseph
Clement, Tony	Klees, Frank	Sterling, Norman W.
Coburn, Brian	Marland, Margaret	Stewart, R. Gary
DeFaria, Carl	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tsubouchi, David H.
Dunlop, Garfield	Maves, Bart	Turnbull, David
Ecker, Janet	Mazzilli, Frank	Wettlaufer, Wayne
Elliott, Brenda	McDonald, AL	Wilson, Jim
Eves, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Galt, Doug	Molinari, Tina R.	Wood, Bob
Gilchrist, Steve	Munro, Julia	Young, David
Gill, Raminder	Murdoch, Bill	
Guzzo, Garry J.	Mushinski, Marilyn	

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

Nays

Agostino, Dominic	Di Cocco, Caroline	McMeekin, Ted
Bartolucci, Rick	Dombrowsky, Leona	Parsons, Ernie
Bountrogianni, Marie	Duncan, Dwight	Peters, Steve
Boyer, Claudette	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Prue, Michael
Bryant, Michael	Hampton, Howard	Pupatello, Sandra
Caplan, David	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Sergio, Mario
Cleary, John C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smitherman, George
Conway, Sean G.	Levac, David	Sorbara, Greg
Cordiano, Joseph	Martel, Shelley	
Crozier, Bruce	McGuinty, Dalton	

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 49; the nays are 34.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It is therefore resolved that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

It now being after 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 6:45 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1806.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon James K. Bartleman

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Gary Carr

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock Halton	Hodgson, Chris (PC) Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Beaches-East York	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Marie (L)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Gill, Raminder (PC)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Christopherson, David (ND)
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Hastings-Frontenac- Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Leona (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée	Huron-Bruce	Johns, Hon / L'hon Helen (PC) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Education / vice-première ministre, ministre de l'Éducation
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, David (L)	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Minister of Public Safety and Security / ministre de la Sécurité et de la Sécurité publique
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Associate Minister of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation / ministre associé de l'Entreprise, des Débouchés et de l'Innovation	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Dufferin-Peel- Wellington-Grey	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales	London West / -Ouest	Wood, Bob (PC)
Durham	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	London-Fanshawe	Mazzilli, Frank (PC)
Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Culture / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement, ministre de la Culture
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Steve (L)	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Sampson, Rob (PC)
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Hon / L'hon Tim (PC) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises		
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L)		
Etobicoke Centre / -Centre	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		
Etobicoke North / -Nord	Hastings, John (PC)		
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)		
Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)		
Guelph-Wellington	Elliott, Hon / L'hon Brenda (PC) Minister of Community, Family and Children's Services / ministre des Services à la collectivité, à la famille et à l'enfance		

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

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

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

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