



No. 54B

N° 54B

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

First Session, 38th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Première session, 38^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 1 June 2004

Mardi 1^{er} juin 2004

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 1 June 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 1^{er} juin 2004

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2004

LOI DE 2004

SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 31, 2004, on the motion for second reading of Bill 83, An Act to implement budget measures / Projet de loi 83, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures budgétaires.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask for unanimous consent to stand down the rest of Mr Prue's lead as he's not able to be here tonight.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Joseph N. Tascona): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Further debate?

Mr Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans): Public infrastructure is essential to our quality of life in Ontario. Public infrastructure allows our social, economic and environmental quality of life to continue uninterrupted. I believe that public infrastructure is taken for granted. This has led to complacency in Ontario.

As a result, Ontario faces a growing infrastructure challenge. This challenge has been well documented. Over the last century, we have developed a vast network of transportation, water and power systems, along with educational and health facilities across Ontario. These infrastructure assets, estimated to be worth \$1.6 trillion nationally, have helped create a robust economy and allowed an unsurpassed quality of life.

But many components of our vast infrastructure network are reaching the end of their service lives. What's more, a lack of sustained investment in public infrastructure is jeopardizing its safety and reliability. The lack of sustained investment has resulted in out-of-control infrastructure debt estimated upwards of \$20 billion in Ontario.

Through our budget and four-year plan, we will stop this neglect that happened under the last government. This accumulated infrastructure deficit represents a significant debt, with a more direct impact on Ontario than the fiscal debt, since it affects Ontarians' health, safety, and well-being. Costs of neglect escalate with time.

This government has started the detailed planning of a comprehensive, multi-year strategy to reduce infrastructure debt and undo the past neglect. There is significant need for investment in municipal roads and bridge infrastructure. We need to do more than double the current yearly investment of \$1.5 billion in road infrastructure to address the backlog in municipal road repairs. The current municipal road and bridge investment needs are over \$5.7 billion.

Deferring maintenance and rehabilitation is not a cost-effective strategy. The cost of road maintenance and repairs are compared below. On-time maintenance costs about \$750 per year, per kilometre, per lane. If we go with a lack of maintenance, which has been the past experience, after 12 years, when the roads have to be rehabilitated, it costs \$80,000 per kilometre, per lane—more than 10 times the proper maintenance. If the lack of maintenance goes to 15 years and requires reconstruction, it's \$250,000 per kilometre, per lane.

Real investment in municipal roads declined during the 1990-2001 period. This was a period that I had records of but I'm sure it continued to 2003. That was part of the provincial highways downloading and expansion of the system. Considering the growth of the municipal road system due to expansion and provincial highway transfers, there has been a significant decline in investment in municipal roads on a per kilometre basis during this period.

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Prior to downloading, the province provided conditional grants to municipalities for roads. On average, between 1992 and 1995 these conditional grants amounted to \$400 million for capital and \$350 million for operating purposes on an annual basis to municipalities alone. Many municipalities lack sufficient resources and financial capacity to undertake the necessary repair and maintenance programs for their road and bridge structures. The ability of municipalities to finance improvements has been constrained due to the limited tax base and the need to compete for funding with capital projects and other priority areas, such as water infrastructure.

Assessing the current state of municipal roads and bridges is complicated due to the limited and dated information available. There are 12,000 municipal bridges in Ontario. An estimated 2,200 were in substandard condition and required an investment of approximately \$1 billion. The needs are expected to be higher in 2003 as a result of underinvestment by municipalities in recent years. The cost could be higher depending on whether the

current state of bridges has deteriorated to the point of requiring a bridge replacement versus repair only. The average cost of a bridge repair is \$500,000 compared with a range of \$4 million to \$10 million per bridge if they have to be replaced.

In this year's provincial budget, the government is taking the high road. It has committed itself to \$3.3 billion this year to improve roads, sewers and other infrastructure. For the first time, this government is developing a 10-year strategic infrastructure investment plan. We're committing \$505 million for municipal and local infrastructure investments, creating the Ontario Strategic Infrastructure Financing Authority to provide financing for public infrastructure and to issue infrastructure renewal bonds to allow Ontarians to share in financing infrastructure investment.

We are partnering with the federal government to help small and rural communities through the five-year \$900-million Canada-Ontario municipal-rural infrastructure fund to improve water quality, upgrade sewage treatment, waste management and repair local roads and bridges.

The success of all economic, social and environmental policies and programs depends on sound investment in public infrastructure, as I believe that public infrastructure is in fact the foundation on which our quality of life is built. This budget makes that investment.

Dealing with schools: The conditions that exist today inside our public schools are intolerable. Schools are literally crumbling, roofs are leaking, buckets in classrooms catch raindrops and oil furnace boilers are no longer functioning. Premier McGuinty and Minister Kennedy recently announced an amortization fund: \$200 million on an annual basis that will leverage \$2.1 billion in financing that school boards can obtain to improve their infrastructure.

The government has made a substantial commitment to renew school facilities to ensure every student is educated in a clean, safe and comfortable school. This long-term commitment starts in 2005-06. The total of infrastructure upgrades required for schools is about \$8 billion.

Ernie Eves's empty promises to take responsibility for over 1,000 bridges a year was estimated to cost \$333 million a year for the next 12 years. That government only budgeted \$41 million to pay for the uploading of rural bridges—a commitment but no dollars.

On April 19 and April 21 of this year, the member from Oak Ridges rose in this House and suddenly realized there were unsafe bridges in the province. After eight years of neglect, we have that party discovering that there are unsafe bridges. Their neglect caused the situation.

The way it came about was that that member got up and spoke of an "extremely well researched" article by the Toronto Star "that relates to a very serious safety issue that demands your attention. It speaks to the literally hundreds of bridges across this province that are in a serious state of disrepair in many cases—"

It's strange that a former Minister of Transportation should have to read in that article what the eight years of that government had caused.

Also on April 21, he was asking about these unsafe bridges, and of course they've been unsafe because there's been no investment in them over the many years.

This government is prepared to work with municipalities. The Minister of Transportation stated in this House that we are prepared to give them a new deal so they can address their long-term issues. This government takes its responsibilities seriously, but they never did for eight and a half years. As the Minister of Transportation, the member from Oak Ridges did nothing and had to read in the Star that the bridges were unsafe. Just imagine that kind of neglect.

The McGuinty government has joined with the federal government for a new Canada-Ontario municipal road infrastructure fund, COMRIF, a major commitment to invest in capital projects that will build strong, sustainable communities in Ontario. The fund will provide \$900 million over the course of five years for the renewal of public infrastructure in small towns and rural communities across Ontario. The fund is designed to support infrastructure renewal needs of cities and towns with populations under 250,000. Small urban centres and rural municipalities will now have better financial tools to plan and manage their own future. Hundreds of communities in all parts of this province will benefit from this new fund, which will help smaller municipalities provide clean drinking water, better waste water treatment facilities, fix roads and repair bridges, ultimately strengthening communities across the province and delivering real, positive change to Ontario.

Apart from representing our government's commitment to building strong communities across Ontario, this fund also represents the new spirit of co-operation between federal, provincial and municipal governments. For the first time, we have full participation from all three levels of government in developing a program to renew the public face of Ontario. The previous government engaged in a war of attrition with other levels of government. Political posturing and endless bickering crippled the policies and programs that survived those quarrels. In contrast, our government has achieved a level of co-operation with our counterparts in the federal government and, with our partners at the municipal level, it is already yielding results. We no longer waste our energy in pointless bickering with the federal government and, for the first time, municipal officials, through the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, are contributing their knowledge and expertise in the design of a program that will deal with their own.

Many of us are familiar with the aging nuclear plants that are coming near the end of their service. Despite a vastness of clean, renewable energy, Ontario continues to rely on dirty resources and energy like coal.

What has happened in the past eight years and was done to infrastructure in Ontario? We have \$8 billion of undone maintenance in schools, \$4 billion in undone

maintenance in roads, \$3 million in bridges and \$10 million in energy. The federal-provincial-municipal team will bring back the public infrastructure so essential to our quality of life in Ontario. Our budget is tough and will be difficult for Ontarians, but the additional revenues will, in the long run, contribute greatly to our quality of life and the economic strength of our great province.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Yes, since you said that, I'll recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): It gives me great pride to have an opportunity to participate in the debate on our government's first budget. I say right from the get-go that this is a budget beyond anything else that delivers so much on the extraordinary promise that we made with respect to Ontario's health care system. It is, in fact, a budget which fuels a transformation agenda, which finds its roots in the great work that Roy Romano did on behalf of our country. You have before you in this budget that we offer to the people of Ontario a move forward on significant efforts to transform our health care system toward one which provides a much greater enhancement to the quality of services Ontarians cherish.

I have the opportunity almost every day to make a speech in which I'm always pleased to say that I believe that medicare is the very best expression of Canadian values. If this is true, and I believe with all of my heart it is, then we find in this presentation of this government's budget by my friend the honourable member for Vaughan-King-Aurora a commitment to this most essential of public services. I want to say right from the get-go that we talk about health care a lot, we talk about technology and bricks and mortars. But at the end of the day, this is really the ultimate human endeavour, with people delivering care to other people.

I want to start with a quote that comes from Dr John Rapin, president of the Ontario Medical Association. This is what he said in response to our budget:

"I want to applaud the government for making good on its promises to increase funding to long-term care, mental health, home care and children's mental health services in Ontario. Expanding funding for children's immunization programs and public health is long overdue in Ontario, and will improve health prevention and promotion initiatives."

That's from John Rapin, and John Rapin knows that our government, in difficult and pressing fiscal circumstances, has moved forward with a commitment that is measured in dollars at an additional \$2.2 billion for the purposes of delivering on quality health care in our province and measured in percentages at 7.3%.

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Above all else, what this is a reflection of is our government's commitment to fulfill the promises that we have made to enhance the essential public services in the province of Ontario. What we find in this transformation agenda is a drive to community, a drive to provide resources at the community level, as close to people's

homes as possible. Because we know that not only is that desirable from the patient's standpoint, but we also know that delivering health care in the setting that is closest to home often also means we are delivering it in the least costly environment possible.

I want to focus on five initiatives that are all part of this drive to community; five significant investment areas, all of which will have the effect of improving the underlying health conditions of Ontarians, but will also have the important effect of taking some pressure off our hospitals, which have for too long now been asked to do too much because of a sheer absence of investment in other pieces of health care to be found at the community level.

On public health, we've had ample evidence that our public health apparatus in this province has been diminished and we've moved forward as a government to fulfill a key recommendation of both the Walker and Campbell reports that have been brought to us as a result of Ontario's experiences with SARS. Those reports both asked us to make a commitment as a government to move back toward 75% of the funding for public health. We see the first instalment of this because we understand that in order to have a good system of health care, we have to have a public health apparatus at the public health level across the province that gives us the capacity to help keep people well in the first place and to protect us from those emergent threats like SARS.

A second piece of the puzzle is about long-term care. I am enormously proud that my parliamentary assistant, the member from Nipissing, was involved in doing an awfully good body of work. And I am extraordinarily proud that this government, the Dalton McGuinty government, in its first budget moves forward in this year with a \$406-million new investment in long-term care; \$191 million of that targeted at those beds we already have in place to make sure the loved ones we have—our parents and our grandparents—are given the right and dignity to a quality of care that can only be enhanced with the fact that as a result of an investment of \$191 million, some 2,000 additional employees will be deployed in these long-term-care settings to enhance the care for our loved ones.

Home care is a third piece of our drive to community. This year home care will see \$100 million in additional funding, \$70 million targeted at post-acute stay, \$20 million targeted at the care we provide for people in our communities who are struggling with mental health challenges, and \$10 million to enhance our capacity to provide end-of-life care for those people who have come to the end of the road. To give them the opportunity to die in dignity and to die in the peace of home and in the care and comfort of their loved ones, our government makes a commitment of \$10 million this year to help to develop a dramatic expansion of our capacities for end-of-life care.

We don't stop there. We move forward with primary health care reform. This phrase "primary health care" has come to mean many things. When associated with the previous government it has come to mean failure. But

when we talk about it, we're talking about family health teams. I'm pleased to say our government is moving forward on our commitment to bring 150 family health teams, an interdisciplinary approach of doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and other health care providers working together in a team, all focused on the individual patient—an investment over the next four years of \$600 million to make this dream a reality for those one million Ontarians, who, as a result of the previous government's lack of progress, have no access to basic care, no access in connection to a doctor. We are moving forward with a \$600-million investment for primary care, which will make an enormous difference.

Addictions and mental health: One of the things family practitioners tell me is their practices have been burdened with people who cannot receive anywhere else in the community the kind of support they need to deal with their addictions and underlying mental health. I have been heard to say that addiction and mental health treatment facilities in our province had not seen a new penny since before Bob Rae's hair turned grey. That's a long time ago now, 12 long years and no new money for addictions and mental health until this government's budget and a \$65-million investment this year alone to enhance the quality of mental health, and a further \$25-million investment for children's mental health.

I want to close by talking about how this is a seniors' budget. I heard with some shock the member for Toronto-Danforth talk earlier about how this budget wasn't for seniors. There is an additional \$300 million this year to provide the necessary drugs. These enhancements I just mentioned with respect to home care and long-term care primarily focus on our seniors, giving them the independence to live in their homes and giving them dignity in long-term-care facilities.

I am also enormously proud our government recognizes that, for many people, access points in our health care system mean waiting too long for the surgeries they require. Our government is a results-based government. We've laid it on the line. We've clearly said that as a result of this budget, a health care budget with extraordinary new investments in health care, we're going to move forward in a dramatic expansion of our capacity to deal with cataracts. That's targeted largely at seniors and we know that's essential to their independence. There are more hips and knees because we find that they wear out, and we can restore quality of life for people who need them, including at least two colleagues of ours in the Legislature today. There are more resources for cancer and cardiac, and nine new MRI and CT sites over the course of the next year.

This is above all a budget that delivers on our commitments to enhance the quality of our public services, namely, health care, and I am honoured to have an opportunity to speak to it and to support it as well.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): In a few minutes our critic for finance will be addressing the House in his leadoff time. It's interesting to hear the

Minister of Health talk about all the fantastic things that are happening. It's amazing to think that in our time in government from 1995 to 2003 we added \$11 billion, but we didn't do it with a health premium. We didn't do it to the tune of \$2,000 for every family in Ontario. That \$2,000 is coming out of the pockets of the hard-working people, the working families of the province. That will have a dramatic effect on the economy. I don't know if people understand that. You take \$2,000 from the average family—they don't all make \$85,000 or \$90,000 or \$120,000 a year. Many people earn \$30,000 or \$40,000. They cannot afford that kind of money, but the health premium that he is bragging about with all the investments is on the hard-working people of Ontario, on the backs of their families.

It's disgusting to listen to this because the previous government, without Paul Martin, the architect of the destruction of health care in Canada, increased funding by \$11 billion in that eight years. It is disappointing to hear the Minister of Health—

Interjection.

Mr Dunlop: Now he has decided to heckle. I kept quiet while he was talking, but he has to babble away and do his heckling. The fact is that \$11 billion was invested with a strong economy in the province of Ontario. Now here we go, with this health premium that is destroying the working families in Ontario. It's destroying, as far as I'm concerned, with the cutbacks—we've seen the delisting of services. It's very disappointing that we're debating a bill that is so draconian in its intent in Ontario.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): You've got to love the Liberals. I'm listening to George, and it isn't just George; it's a whole lot of Liberals. I think I heard George say tonight that the NDP didn't spend on health care either. You guys didn't spend. Neither did New Democrats. This is when we had a recession, in 1990. Liberals denied there was a recession, *primero*. *Secondo*—

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: Please, I've only got two minutes. Mind you, I'll be speaking in about a half-hour, for those who are tuning in, for about 20 minutes. Liberals denied that we had a—

Hon Mr Smitherman: They all tuned out.

Mr Marchese: George, please stick around.

Remember, we had a recession. Liberals denied that we had a recession.

Hon Mr Smitherman: That's why you caused the doctor shortage.

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Mr Marchese: Then, George says, New Democrats didn't spend enough on doctors or nurses, presumably, or on health care in general. So Liberals say: "Oh, my God, New Democrats had a deficit. We would never have such a deficit." At the same time, out of the other side of the Liberal mouth, they would say, "My God, you didn't spend enough on health care, on post-secondary education, on cities," or whatever it is you want to say. So you say, "You didn't spend enough. You've got a deficit."

Liberals always want to have it both ways, each and every time.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport): What's wrong with that?

Mr Marchese: Tony Ruprecht says, "What's wrong with that?" Nothing, nothing at all, except this is what defines Liberals. They want to have it both ways, because that's the way they are.

Georgie, I want to ask you, as a good Liberal when you put your hand to your heart, how do you defend attacking people who make \$20,000 with a \$300 premium in a couple of years and those earning a million only paying 900 bucks? As a Liberal, how do you defend that, George?

Mrs Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre): It's my pleasure to stand and make a couple of comments. I guess I was part of that process back when the NDP were in their recession. It was fascinating to remember the processes that were put in place around the social contract that have left an extraordinary legacy in this province. Maybe if we had a little reflection, we would recognize that the NDP do not have a particular track record of which they should be proud.

Having said that, the other thing that must be acknowledged is that the member from Trinity-Spadina was speaking about the process of health care. He referred to \$20,000, and had the amount wrong. At \$20,000 there is no premium.

The more important thing to recognize is that when you deal with a budget you have to acknowledge that we have a deficit. You may not like it. It exists. It may not have been what people thought it should have been. It may be more in some cases, it may have been less in other circumstances, but the fact of the matter is there is a deficit and you need to deal with it. So do you continue to spend money that you don't have, or do you acknowledge that you have a problem, find a solution and move forward? That's what this budget has done. It has recognized that in order to move forward you have to provide a process whereby you still can sustain and keep the reliability of your programs and your services, and at the same time put in place a process that deals with the deficit.

Some may choose not to do this. Others may choose to take another path. The Liberal government has chosen to be responsible in its process of dealing with this issue. Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): I have a question for the Minister of Health. I have a constituent, a Liberal, who came up to me and said, "I think those Tories are terrible." He bought hook, line and sinker that whole Peters report, but said he was convinced to vote Liberal because he saw George Smitherman standing with a big smile on his face over the head of Dalton McGuinty when he signed the taxpayers' protection pledge, promising a referendum.

This constituent is a Liberal. They voted for you. They accept the Peters report, but say, "Where's the referendum? The referendum wouldn't cost any more today

than it would have the day you signed it." They said they liked John Baird's idea to piggyback it with the federal election, with Elections Canada, so it wouldn't cost a dime.

I saw, not just George Smitherman, but Laura Broten with a big smile. She was standing over there and cheering at Dalton signing the taxpayer protection pledge.

Mr Dunlop: So was Bob Delaney.

Mr Baird: So was Bob Delaney, I'm informed. So was Gerry Phillips.

The Acting Speaker: Would the member take his seat for one second. The member is well aware that you've got to refer to members by their riding names, not their personal names.

Mr Baird: Thank you very much, Speaker. But you see, they weren't members at the time, Speaker. It was the candidate for Laurel Broten's riding who did this.

So they voted Liberal because, they said, "At least these guys are going to have a referendum before they raise taxes." I just want to ask the Minister of Health, could he please explain to me why no referendum? Why won't he allow the people of Ontario the opportunity to pass judgment?

Some of them want to vote against the federal Liberals as a result, but I'm saying they'll bring in the referendum. They promised it. We'll convince them to change their minds. So will they tell us? I look forward to hearing the minister's explanation.

The Acting Speaker: The minister has two minutes to reply.

Hon Mr Smitherman: In direct response to my honourable friend, I want to say that for the first time there was some candour and honesty from that member in this House. He has just accepted the Peters report. In response to his acceptance of the Peters report, I demand to know from him, where's the \$9,000? Where is the \$9,000 that the law of Ontario dictates that every Tory cabinet minister who was involved in pulling the wool over the eyes of the people in the province of Ontario—where's the \$9,000, John? Pay up, I say to the member from Nepean-Carleton. Where is the \$9,000? The truth has shined through tonight in the Legislature.

The Acting Speaker: Take your seat. Please take your seat. Would the members quieten down? I can't even hear the Minister of Health.

Hon Mr Smitherman: What I'm pleased about is that after our relentless questioning of the member for Nepean-Carleton these long days, he's finally come clean with his constituents and acknowledged that he was the participant in a \$5.6-billion cover-up, a \$5.6 billion that grew.

When we got here and looked a little deeper into the closet, what else did we find, I say to the member from Nepean-Carleton, as we looked deeper? We found at least \$721 million in the budgets of the hospitals of this province that, under a nudge and wink from Tony Clement—who was then a Tory MPP and cabinet minister and who is now running and pretending that he wasn't part of a gang that pulled a \$5.6-billion spool of wool over the eyes of the people of Ontario.

Instead, we have a government that stands firm in its place, committed to the budget that we brought forward because it does what we promised. It does what we said we would do, which is to enhance the fundamental quality of public services in Ontario. What I look forward to in the next election, in October 2007, is the opportunity—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Your time is up. Further debate on the budget bill?

Mr Baird: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to the budget. I want to say to those people sitting at home in their living rooms that Rosario Marchese, the member for Trinity-Spadina, is up next and will be adding his thoughts to the budget. I am pleased, on behalf of constituents in Nepean-Carleton, to have the opportunity to rise and speak to this budget bill.

This budget bill is an odious piece of legislation. I have never seen such a public reaction to this budget bill. I have received e-mails, faxes, calls and visits in my constituency office. I've talked to people right across the riding in Barrhaven, Stittsville, Greely, Metcalfe, Manotick and North Gower. Frankly, they're just livid. They are angry and furious like I have never seen them before in all of my time here.

They may have disagreed on occasion with some of the measures the Harris government took but they said, "At least Harris was doing what he said he would do. He said he was going to tighten the belt and he did it. I'll tell you, he did what he said he would do and he restored some honour and some integrity to politics."

I want to talk about the fundamental centrepiece of this government. People are so concerned. There's a variety of promises that politicians make, but I don't think there's ever been a promise—Pierre Trudeau, our former Prime Minister, promised not to bring in wage and price controls and then did it. But he didn't bring in a piece of legislation saying he wouldn't, and then sign a pledge before election day promising not to. He didn't spend \$4 million running TV ads looking into living rooms across the country saying that he wouldn't bring them in. This was probably the most black-and-white campaign commitment that was ever made before in Ontario history, and people in Ontario are angry. People in Nepean-Carleton are angry, and I'm supposed to be here to represent their views.

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Interjections.

Mr Baird: I can understand why these Liberal MPPs are angry, because they've been told by Andrew Steele exactly what to say. That's unfortunate, because I think they should be here to represent the people of the province who elected them.

I want to congratulate some members for having the courage to speak up. I have the latest Liberal news release here. Constituency week provided an opportunity for many Liberal MPPs "to reflect on the political anthrax that the Liberals delivered in their May 18 budget. For many, the groundswell of pleas for mercy and the outrage that they heard from constituents was just too

much. Despite strict central directives, some rookie and veteran Liberal MPPs told their local media how they really felt about the budget." I want to share with you some of these concerned Ontarians.

Marie Bountrogianni, my good friend the member for Hamilton Mountain and a minister in the government, said that she will be fighting to lower the premiums. I quote the Hamilton Spectator, May 26, page A1:

"She admitted she's hearing from angry constituents who say they cannot afford to pay premiums on a salary of \$29,000, and hinted those premiums may be lowered.

"I will be taking that message back to (Queen's Park)," she said." Well, I hope Marie Bountrogianni is taking that message back to Queen's Park.

I also want to talk about my buddy, my friend Dave Levac, the member for Brant. I see some of his staff—

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the member again to please refer to other members of the House by their riding names.

Mr Baird: Dave—oh, sorry; the member for Brant, the Liberal whip, told chiropractors that he felt their pain and suggested that McGuinty should revisit the decision to slash these services.

Mr Marchese: Sympathetic pain, vicarious pain—what kind does he mean?

Mr Baird: Sympathetic pain; vicarious pain, perhaps. Perhaps he needed an adjustment—a visit to the chiropractor—but he can't afford to go now.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): He needs an attitude adjustment.

Mr Baird: "He needs an attitude adjustment," my friend from Halton says. But I want to read you what he says. Commenting on this decision, he said:

"The irony is that I spoke to them just after returning from my regular appointment," blank "chuckled, 'so believe me, I understand their pain.'

"He said he didn't want to give any false hope, but added, 'Revisiting decisions is something we should always be prepared to discuss.'"

I want to congratulate the member for Brant because he's concerned about the two-tier health care the Liberals have brought in. He's concerned enough to say that no longer should you present your OHIP card when you visit this medical practitioner. Take out your Amex card—

Mr Marchese: Your Visa.

Mr Baird: —your Gold Visa, and pay with that. If you can't afford to, just go home. Don't see this medical practitioner. If you can't afford it, suffer.

Mr Chudleigh: Suck it up.

Mr Baird: "Suck it up," as the member for Halton says.

I also want to talk about the member for Niagara Falls, Kim Craiton, who demanded that McGuinty restore coverage for the health care services he slashed. I want to quote from the Niagara Falls Review, Tuesday, May 25:

"Craiton said he will lobby members of his own party and ask them to reverse that decision and restore the coverage."

I am very excited that the member for Niagara Falls is here.

Mr Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls): On a point of order—

Mr Marchese: He's not in his seat.

Mr Baird: He's not in his seat.

I was so excited about that.

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): Did you mention Ernie Parsons?

Mr Baird: The member for Leeds-Grenville, who I know was out in his constituency working hard recently, said, "Talk about the member from Belleville." But I'm going to wait and see the transcript. In question period, I'm looking forward to the member for Oak Ridges coming in and tabling the transcript. I'm going to give the member from Belleville the benefit of the doubt, and boy, oh boy, will we see what that transcript says tomorrow.

Mr Craitor: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I wanted to correct the record. As usual, the member on the other side—

Mr Marchese: You can't correct the record.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: It's not a point of order, but it's a point of information. Thank you.

I'll return to the member for Nepean-Carleton.

Mr Baird: If you want to correct yourself, talk to the reporter at the Niagara Falls Review. This is what it says on page A3 in the Niagara Falls Review, Tuesday, May 25: "Craitor said he will lobby members of his own party and ask them to reverse that decision and restore the coverage." They can call John Baird names, but now he's attacking the good integrity of the staff at the Niagara Falls Review.

I've been to the peninsula. I want to move my way into eastern Ontario. Our newest member from eastern Ontario, Jim Brownell, said—

Interjection.

Mr Baird: Sorry, the member for Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh. I apologize, Speaker. He said:

"I am not happy with certain things in the budget. But it is a good budget. We had some difficult choices to make."

Potentially, he is going to vote for a bill he's not happy with. I would say that the constituents of Stormont-Dundas-Charlottenburgh want him to fight against this bill.

Mr Chudleigh: What about the ones with sore backs?

Mr Baird: What about the ones with sore backs? They can get out their Amex cards, because this is McGuinty two-tier health care. They won't take the OHIP card any more. They'll take the Amex card.

Mr Chudleigh: What if I don't have one?

Mr Baird: If you don't have an Amex card, you have to suffer.

Mr Chudleigh: Suck it up.

Mr Baird: Suck it up and suffer. That's what they say.

The member for Ottawa-Orléans called the budget "brutal." Those aren't my words.

Interjection: Who's this?

Mr Baird: The member for Ottawa-Orléans called this budget "brutal," and I congratulate the member for Ottawa-Orléans. "Ottawa-Orléans Liberal MPP Phil McNeely described the budget as 'brutal' but insisted the new tax was required to improve health care and education." That's the member for Ottawa-Orléans.

I'll tell you, these are mild compared to the constituents I'm hearing from. I think we're going to have to consider supplementary estimates for counselling for some of the constituency staff in these Liberal MPPs' offices. I feel their pain. They must be getting it all over the place. They must be getting it from their supporters. A real slap in the face.

Mr Marchese: Taking a beating.

Mr Baird: Taking a beating. We're going to have to consider supplementary estimates, I'm sure, to provide some help for these Liberal estimates.

I'm also pleased to announce in this House at the first opportunity: They're back. We've seen the re-emergence of that great group, Ontarians For Responsible Government. They are back. They were first born in the lean years of Bob Rae's government to try to fight big government, big taxes, big deficits, and they're back. They put an ad in the paper recently, and I want to read a little bit about their success:

"The National Citizens Coalition"—of course that's a group formerly headed up by our next Prime Minister, the Honourable Stephen Harper—"is resurrecting its project group, Ontarians For Responsible Government, to oppose the policies of Ontario Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty.

"We set up ORG in the dark days of former Premier Bob Rae," says NCC vice-president Gerry Nicholls. "Back then ORG's tough ad campaigns helped to drive the NDP from office. Today we want to put the same kind of heat on the provincial Liberal government."

"ORG's first shot is a full-page newspaper ad appearing today in the Toronto Sun."

I'll tell you, were Paul Martin's people angry about this. I want to read what it says. It has a big picture of our Premier with the headline, "Had it with Dalton's broken promises? Then send the Liberals a message." They tell folks where they can contact the Premier. We're really glad that Ontarians For Responsible Government has re-emerged to help fight this big-spending government.

Constituents right across Ontario—I had occasion to be in Kemptville, in the member for Leeds-Grenville's constituency, and I'll tell you, they were angry. A lot of young suburban families were talking to me and to Gord Brown, the next member of Parliament for Leeds-Grenville, about the pain they're feeling. Gord Brown will take that message to the House of Commons, finally, and talk about why health care should be a priority for this government.

1930

People say that the Liberals are just one party federally and provincially. I say no, no, the federal one is the one that cut health care by \$25 billion; it's the provincial government that raised taxes. You have to differentiate them. In Ontario, all the Liberal MPPs of the day voted for the taxpayer protection pledge, and it makes raising taxes a crime. But, I'll tell you, people in Ontario know that while the Premier of Ontario is committing highway robbery, it is Paul Martin driving the getaway car. Paul Martin is an unindicted co-conspirator to this crime because he cut health care by \$25 billion, and that's why we're dealing with this now. In the budget presented in the House federally there is not a single new dime for health care in Ontario.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: I say to the Minister of Community and Social Services, you should get on the Speaker's roster and join this debate.

This is the reality we are facing. Health care spending was cut by the feds. The former government cut it from \$17 billion up to \$28 billion. That's a health care cut: \$11 billion. I see the Minister of Health stand in his place and talk about how, "Oh, we're going to put \$65 million into that and \$100 million into that." I don't trust them. People in Ontario don't trust you. I dare you to tell me the name of a single Liberal MP who says they agree with your budget. Can you name anyone seeking office in this federal election who agrees with this budget? I can tell you Réginald Bélair, from Timmins-James Bay, has come out against the budget, and many others.

People are asking why Paul Martin would have called a federal election when the aftermath of this budget is being felt, that he was surprised. We found out that he had a heads-up warning. The ever-vigilant member for Leeds-Greenville, our House leader, put out a press release today that I would like to read:

"Ontario Conservative House leader, Bob Runciman, MPP for Leeds-Grenville, today called on the Liberal Premier Dalton McGuinty to step aside for breaching the oath of secrecy he took when he was sworn in as Premier. Runciman charged that McGuinty's public admission that he gave Prime Minister Martin advance notice of measures contained in the Ontario budget constituted a clear violation of the oath of allegiance for members of cabinet.

"McGuinty not only violated parliamentary conventions surrounding budget secrecy, he broke his own sworn oath to respect cabinet secrecy,' fumed Runciman." And it takes a lot to get this guy angry. "He's proven that not only is his signature worthless, but his sworn oath. He should resign!" I agree with the member for Leeds-Greenville on that.

I want to talk about the health care provisions of the budget. The Ontario Hospital Association has come forward and has said that the increases for hospitals won't cover half of what inflation does. Inevitably, one of two things will happen: This government will be forced into coming to the table with additional funding to help fund

the Queensway-Carleton Hospital, the Ottawa Hospital and other agencies because there is not enough money in the budget and the spending will go even higher; or they'll have to lay off hospital staff. They'll have to lay off health care workers. It's terrible.

I'll tell you there are constituents in my riding who are concerned about the challenges that will impose on our local hospitals. I thought the president of the Ontario Hospital Association in her post-budget comments was restrained, to say the least, but I can tell you they will not get away with it.

I say to the members opposite—Education: Where is the follow-up to the Rozanski report? Where is the follow-up to the investments that were recommended in Rozanski? These folks have put all of their money in a big gift-wrapped gift and sent it to the union bosses to solve their special interests.

I see the member for Ottawa Centre here. A friend of mine was downtown outside of the Sheraton hotel—

Hon Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): You don't have any friends.

Mr Baird: I say to the member for Windsor West, what happened to you when you went to your high school reunion? They booed her. She got booed in her own constituency. Let's hear it for the booing. I think that's terrible. I'm absolutely shocked. No wonder she got re-elected by the skin of her teeth, as she has in the last two elections. No wonder the Liberals lost those two seats federally in Windsor. I'll ask you, is that the case?

The member for Ottawa Centre—there were two taxpayers who were shoring up outside of the Sheraton—

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): Conservatives.

Mr Baird: They're taxpayers. They were exercising their democratic right to protest. The member for Ottawa Centre walked by one gentleman and sneered at him. The gentleman was wearing a large pink costume. Then he actually gave a rude gesture to another Ontario taxpayer, as he walked in to hear the Minister of Finance give a speech. I can't show you the gesture. Maybe the member for Durham can, but I can't. The member for Durham possibly could. But he did that to a taxpayer, nonetheless. He pays your salary, I say to the member for Ottawa Centre. You work for him. I can't believe—giving your own constituent a rude gesture. I was absolutely shocked. It was reported back to me.

I did receive an e-mail from—

Interjections.

Mr Baird: The member for Ottawa Centre. I think that you're aware of the taxpayer who he made that rude gesture to.

I did hear from a taxpayer, a well-respected accountant. In the budget, there is a war of words going on in Ottawa between the Minister of Finance and Randall Denley of the Ottawa Citizen. Mr Denley has exposed the charade that is the \$3.9-billion trick.

I want to take a moment to explain the \$3.9-billion trick to taxpayers. The Liberal government of the late 1980s and the NDP government of the early 1990s signed

the privatization of the hydro system contracts with the private sector to buy electricity at eight cents a kilowatt hour, signed by—ministers in that government were named Sorbara and Phillips—

Mr Marchese: Bradley.

Mr Baird:—and Bradley.

Mr Runciman: And Patten.

Mr Baird: And Patten, and the NDP did more of them. There are 1,700 megawatts of this high-priced power that they paid for through the private sector. This liability was sitting with the Ontario government, so they were losing \$250 million a year. They're now turning that over to the Ontario Energy Board and saying, "Let the consumers pay."

That's one issue. We can talk about whether that's a bad or a good idea. You promised in the election campaign not to raise hydro rates. But we'll put that aside.

There'll be \$1.70 per month on the hydro bill to pay this off—the new McGuinty hydro tax, as my friend from Clarington calls it.

1940

They took this \$3.9-billion liability, but because of accounting, they have to count it as revenue because it's debt off the books. I don't take any issue with counting it as revenue. But surely you would use that to pay off debt, and they haven't done it. This is like selling your house, going on a spending spree with the proceeds but not paying off the mortgage. It's going to catch up with you. It is an Enron-style trick, stunt. If you did this in the private sector, you would go to jail. It would be considered illegal. It would be considered corrupt. It would be considered scandalous. There would be a public inquiry in this country if anyone did that.

They put this \$3.9 billion down as income, but how much is going into their pockets? Nothing, not a single billion of that \$3.9 billion will ever show its place this fiscal year. It will take until 2048 to pay that off.

Mr John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke): Will you still be here?

Mr Baird: I will still be here. So will the member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke. It will take the better part of 50 years to pay this off, but they're going to spend all the money this year. That is an utter disgrace. It's accounting. They could have counted it as revenue, and then there was no requirement to spend it.

I want to read from an e-mail I received from a very well-respected senior accountant in my constituency in Nepean-Carleton:

"I note with some concern (as shared by Randall Denley) the inclusion of \$3.9 billion in the 2004-05 estimates. I am making some inquiries with my colleagues at the PSAB as to the appropriateness of this entry.

"Assuming the entry is appropriate, at issue may be the timing of the recognition of the \$3.9 billion in the accounts."

Senior accountants are saying that this is a fudge-it budget. It is akin to embezzlement, I say to the member for Halton. I say that Randall Denley in the Citizen is not going to let this issue go away and I'm not going to let

this issue go away. The Conservative caucus is not going to let this issue go away.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: The member for Trinity-Spadina will not let this issue go away. We are tremendously concerned about it.

I thought this budget had the fingerprints of McGuinty on it and the fingerprints of the Minister of Finance. I did not know that Paul Martin had a hand in writing this. The people say, "Oh, come on. Paul Martin didn't write this budget. The federal Liberals have nothing to do with this budget; this is the provincial budget." I learned that Paul Martin's campaign manager, David Herle, got a secret contract to help write and to help sell this budget. It is absolutely outrageous that Paul Martin's campaign manager got a contract to help write this budget.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: Go to your high school reunion and get booed again I say to the member for Windsor West.

Let's look at this: "Contract Given to Grit-Friendly Firm; Untendered Job 'Stinks to High Heaven'" say critics. Let me just quote, "Diane Flanagan, spokesman for Finance Minister Greg Sorbara, confirmed that the Liberal government never held a public tendering process for the contract that was ... given to David Herle's firm." They never did it. Paul Martin's right-hand man got an untendered contract to help write the budget. I hope we'll find out when that contract becomes available, and if they were doing communications work to sell this budget, there had better be a value-for-money audit, because I can tell you this has been the most poorly received budget in contemporary Canadian political history. People are outraged. I don't think there was as much anger when Floyd Laughren brought in his first budget.

But when the untendered contract issue came up they said, "No, he got a subcontract from someone who did get a tendered contract." I said, "Oh, that's a coincidence that someone who was a vendor of record, someone who is eligible for government contracts, just happened to hire Paul Martin's campaign manager to help with the budget." Then we found out, as it says here in Alan Findlay's article from the Toronto Sun, that Flanagan confirmed that the subcontracting idea came from the finance ministry itself. Which bureaucrat at the finance ministry said, "Let's go hire Paul Martin's campaign manager to help us sell this budget"? Give me a break. There's not a single bureaucrat who recommended hiring David Herle, Paul Martin's campaign manager; it was done by Dalton McGuinty directly, and that is absolutely outrageous.

Mr Yakabuski: Good judgment, eh?

Mr Baird: "Good judgment," the member for Barry's Bay says. Boy, oh boy. We used to say they had federal Liberal cousins; now we know that they share the same brain. Their headquarters on St Mary Street is actually co-located with these clowns up in Ottawa.

I am concerned. I was listening to this government's promise and commitment that federal-provincial relations would once again be harmonious, that they could get along with the federal government and that the federal

government could get along with them. We see this as the first instance in Canadian political history where the federal government is now running against the provincial government of the same party.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: You should go to the hustings, I say to the member for Peterborough, because a Conservative is going to get elected in Peterborough this federal election.

Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough): Do you want to bet that Peter Adams won't be re-elected?

Mr Baird: To the charity of your choice, I say to the member.

Mr Leal: Ten bucks, you're on.

Mr Baird: On the issue of betting, if he could talk to the member for Dundas on that same bet, because he owes me one from the by-election in Hamilton East and I'd like to settle on that.

I've also got money to put a friendly wager on Hamilton West, that the opposition will defeat the government there too. It will be most interesting.

They hired Paul Martin's campaign manager to write the budget—untendered contract. They won't tell us how much it is. At least Mike Harris would tell you how much these contracts cost. It was open, it was transparent and you could find out. But they're keeping it secret. The minister refuses to divulge it in this House. It's our money, and it's their friends.

I'll tell you, it took them about 10 seconds to get their friends lined up for contracts. We know that Peter Donolo was hired. Jean Chrétien—his left-hand man was John Manley. And John Manley—they say they put a tendered contract out and hired Jean Chrétien's right-hand man, Peter Donolo—

Interjection: When he was an MP.

Mr Baird: When he was an MP receiving two paycheques. Unbelievable.

We were told it would be different. We have to ask ourselves a question: Has a provincial budget ever brought down a federal government in Canadian political history before? I don't think so. Murray Campbell from the Globe and Mail said that Dalton McGuinty might accomplish something that no political leader in Canadian history has ever done: He could bring down two majority governments in one year.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: "In 15 minutes," he says.

We're tremendously concerned about that. Before Dalton McGuinty asked for more money from hard-working middle-class taxpayers, he should have gone to Ottawa and asked for an increase to the health care budget so that working families weren't pinched.

I brought it up in question period today. One of the many calls I received was from a single mother in Barrhaven who says she can't afford the \$600. After she pays the rent; after she pays her hydro bill, which has gone up; after she pays her car insurance, which has gone up; after she visits the shopping mall; municipal taxes going up after Bob Chiarelli raised them—

Interjection.

Mr Baird: No, she doesn't pay municipal taxes, because she's a renter, but—

Interjection.

Mr Baird: It has an effect on her rent, you're right. She doesn't have the \$600 to pay. I asked the Premier, "What is she to do?" All he could give me was a smug, arrogant answer, to talk about some former year and the fiscal situation under the former government. What is this woman to do?

I talked to a senior citizen on the telephone, who is 58 years old. Her husband has passed away. She's working part-time to supplement her survivor's benefits from her husband. She doesn't have the money to pay this extra premium.

I say to members opposite, what will be cut from the family's budget? Will one of their children not be able to play hockey? Will they have to downsize their home? Will they have to give up the luxury of cable television? Will they not be able to have Internet access at the family's home?

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For a family making \$48,000 or \$50,000, \$600 may not seem like a lot of money to some of these limousine Liberals standing over there, but once a family has paid all their taxes, once they've paid for food and shelter, once they've paid for clothing their children and other expenses—gasoline that's sky-high, electricity bills that are going up by 20%, their car insurance—where are they going to get this money? It's the last \$600, not the first. Don't you guys get that?

I actually don't know what to say to my constituents on this. They're going to go to their boss and get a \$600 raise? I don't think that's going to happen. I don't think there's a single employer anywhere in the province that's just going to say, "Oh, no problem. We'll just pay it off."

This woman is also going to be hit when she goes to the optometrist. She's going to have to take out her credit card when she visits her doctor's office to pay for Dalton McGuinty's two-tier health care. I really don't know what to say to these people. You know what they said to me? They said, "You know what, John? We're not even going to bother voting any more; it doesn't matter. You politicians are all the same, and you don't keep your promises." Dalton McGuinty has driven them over the edge. They don't care about politics and government any more. And you talk about the democratic deficit. You come in here today with the minister of democratic renewal. When we see cynicism of this level it just makes me nod my head.

Mr Chudleigh: Democratic destruction.

Mr Baird: Democratic destruction, the member says.

What I can't understand is this. The government announced, as part of its financial policies—they ran on promising two things. One, they weren't going to raise your taxes, and two, they were going to get rid of the Mike Harris corporate tax cuts. But this budget does the exact opposite. This budget raises taxes on working families, families who just don't have another \$600 or

\$900 to give collectively, for them and their spouse, and it actually cuts taxes on corporations.

I agree with a plan to eliminate the capital tax. It is a job-destroying tax. Frankly, I congratulate the Liberals for cutting corporate taxes. They're too high, and it's wrong. I congratulate them for doing that. But what do I say to the single mother in Barrhaven or to this 58-year-old widow who's working part-time to supplement her survivor's pension when she's paying more and the Royal Bank is paying less? This violates everything that this gang ran on. They eliminate corporate tax cuts in December, and then they bring them back in the spring. We just don't know what to expect next from you people.

When the Minister of Health was speaking about all the increased health procedures, my constituents didn't believe them. Whether it's the nurse at the hospital, the retired businessman who serves on the hospital board or someone wanting home care for their mom, they don't believe them. They don't believe anything this government says.

We saw something remarkable this week. We saw the Prime Minister of Canada get a question from a student in Saskatoon about this government, which is unbelievable. I promised my constituents in Nepean-Carlton—and for two of them I've had the opportunity to raise their issue—that we will do everything legislatively to slow down and stop this tax increase, to stop these broken promises. To do that, I move adjournment of the debate.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1955 to 2025.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 7; the nays are 31.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost and now return again to the member for Nepean-Carlton.

Mr Baird: I'm disappointed. I always support your procedural motions. I'm surprised. So I'm going to continue on my budget speech on this bill.

Hon David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources): You couldn't go for a whole hour?

Mr Baird: That's good.

People say that the Liberals promised not to raise taxes. Of course, the centrepiece of this bill is what I've called a declaration of war against the middle class. For Liberal candidates in Ontario in the federal election, and for Paul Martin, it's proved to be a weapon of mass political destruction. They can't find a single Liberal candidate in—David McGuinty's going around Ottawa South saying he's never met Dalton. That's how bad this is.

Mr Bisson: "I'm not my brother," he said.

Mr Baird: "I'm not my brother," he said. That's right. He's never met him. I've woken them up a bit.

Let's take a fiscal journey by the Liberal Party in a series of quotes. Let's look at Liberal finance critic Gerry Phillips at the standing committee on estimates, June 4th, 2003.

Mr Chudleigh: I was there.

Mr Baird: The member for Halton, as usual, was working hard and was there.

Let's see what Gerry Phillips said: "I therefore take it that there is a \$5-billion risk in the budget." This was Dalton McGuinty's senior finance man. His left brain, for goodness' sake. Let's look at what Dalton McGuinty said on September 11, 2003: "We're also saying that should the need arise, we will slow down the rate at which we go ahead with our promises, but we will not raise taxes and we will certainly not run a deficit." This was Dalton McGuinty. Anticipating a deficit, he said that. Unbelievable.

Coming back to the race in Ottawa South federally, I was in the Tim Hortons at Alta Vista and Bank Street. There was a woman standing in front of me. She hadn't even turned around to see I was standing behind her. She was complaining viciously and saying very unparliamentary things about the Premier—in the heart of his own constituency.

Do you know what the children used to say in Ottawa South? Twenty years ago there was that movie, ET. They used to say, "ET, go home." David McGuinty says, "Dalton, don't come home." David doesn't want Dalton to come home. Dalton, if you're watching, David doesn't want you to come home. He doesn't want you to show your face in Ottawa. Shameful.

2030

Anyway, I'm going to continue the fiscal journey of the Liberal Party. We've already said that the Liberal finance critic, Gerry Phillips, said there was a \$5-billion risk to the budget. We've already said that Dalton McGuinty promised not only to not to run a deficit but that—I'll read it again: "We're also saying that should the need arise, we will slow down the rate at which we go ahead with our promises."

Ten billion dollars in spending increases in one year and you say you've done it? Give me a break.

Let's look at what happened on September 22. A report by the Fraser Institute in the middle of the election campaign says: "Fraser Alert...State of emergency: Ontario's potential \$4.5-billion deficit."

What did Dalton say? The next day Dalton went on the leaders' debate and said, "I won't raise taxes by a single cent for Ontario families." That's what Dalton McGuinty said.

Let's look at some more here. Focus Ontario, Graham Richardson, November 1. What did the Premier say? "One of those broad parameters is that we will not be raising taxes. Families are carrying enough of a burden as it is." That's after Erik Peters's report. After Erik Peters's report, he still recommitted to promising not to raise taxes.

Hon Ms Pupatello: Stop yelling. It's not effective any more.

Mr Baird: I say to the member for Windsor West, go and get booed at your high school reunion again.

People say, "Well, that was last year." Let's look at what Dalton McGuinty said in January. "Question: 'When you say that everything is on the table, does that include tax increases?'" Dalton for once answered the question. He said, "No. No, I won't raise taxes."

What did he say? People are interested, and I say you should go home and go to your riding. You should go door-knocking in your constituency with your federal Liberal candidate and find out what people are saying. And wear a button that says "I love Dalton McGuinty and I love this budget" and you'll find out what they think of you. I say you need to be—

Interjection.

Mr Baird: What riding are you?

Mr Bob Delaney (Mississauga West): Mississauga West.

Hon Ms Pupatello: John, don't be insulting.

Mr Baird: I know he's from Mississauga. There are a lot of ridings in Mississauga. I'm from Ottawa, the other end of the province. He's a new member. I want to know; I'm asking. He should go out and talk to people in his riding.

I was in Mississauga the other day. A thousand people were out to support Parvinder Sandhu in his election race and to support Nina Tangri in hers.

He said no to tax increases on January 14. Greg Sorbara was quoted in the Toronto Star, the National Post and the Ottawa Citizen: "We said during the campaign that we're not going to raise personal income taxes, and we're going to be true to our word on that."

Look on your pay stub in July. It will say "Personal income tax," and your health care premium will be collected on that line. That's what this budget bill says. That's what this budget bill says. The tax rate—

Mr Delaney: Personal income tax is the same.

Mr Baird: Tell that to my constituent who has to pay \$600 extra and doesn't have the money, that that's the same. Tell that to my constituent who's going to have to tell her son that he can't take hockey this coming year because they don't have the money to do it. It's not funny at all. Let's look at what Dalton McGuinty said.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I would ask all members of this House to respect the decorum that I would require. I would like to again recognize the member for Nepean-Carleton.

Interjections.

Mr Baird: Talking about laughing at people, I had a good friend of mine who was at the Toronto Island Airport—

Hon David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal): Name names.

Mr Baird: I'm not going to name the minister who this happened to. You can hear the story out, I say to the

minister opposite. It wasn't David Caplan, the Minister of Infrastructure, I'll tell him that.

But I had a friend who said to me that she was at the Toronto Island Airport, standing waiting for the ferry, and a minister and his staff walked up. Some woman drove up in a beat-up old car and proceeded to empty the car of a lot of plastic bags which she was carrying on her trip, and after she made her way past these groups, they laughed at her. It was a Liberal minister and his staff who laughed at her. I thought that was disgraceful and I wanted to put that on the record. I'll be faxing it to the said minister's office so they'll know about that.

And I'll say it isn't my friend the Minister of the Environment, because she wouldn't do that. I should put on the record that I have two serious issues in my constituency, and the Minister of the Environment and her staff have been very helpful on those issues, so I want to publicly acknowledge that. She has been very helpful and her staff have been very attentive. She is actually sending two of her staff down to meet with some concerned residents, and I want to put that on the record. I appreciate that.

Mr Bisson: That's very good.

Mr Baird: The member for Timmins-James Bay says that's good. I helped the member for Timmins-James Bay when I was minister of francophone affairs and he actually wrote about it in the paper. I think we should do that.

Hon Ms Pupatello: Don't forget when I helped you when you were minister.

Mr Baird: I will acknowledge that Sandra Pupatello—sorry, the member for Windsor West did help me when I was a minister. I will acknowledge that. And I helped her and I helped Windsor.

Let's look at what Dalton McGuinty said on Focus Ontario on April 24. "Well, what we said all along—and I'm very clear about this"—he interrupted what he said and said, "I'm very clear about this"—"is that we're not going to be raising taxes." April 24: That's five weeks ago. He promised Graham Richardson, and through Graham Richardson the people of Ontario, that he would not raise taxes.

Mr Delaney: Your personal tax rate is the same.

Mr Baird: My personal tax rate isn't the same. I've got your budget on page 9, and I'll tell you, I am paying \$750 more. That's \$750 that's gone. I'll tell you that the single mother in my riding is going to be losing \$600. That's not the first \$600, it's the last \$600, so she's got to decide what to do. Is she going to get rid of cable television? Is she going to get rid of expenses for the kids like one of them being able to take hockey as they did last year? Is she going to be able to provide a decent Christmas for her kids? That's what they're going to have to consider.

You should think and ask yourself how someone—whether it's at \$48,000 or the single mother in Barrhaven in my constituency—is going to deal with it. It's incredibly serious. What about that 58-year-old widow, a senior, who is working part-time, which she never did

before, to help supplement her late husband's survivor benefits? Where is she going to get the money?

Interjection.

Mr Baird: I'll talk about welfare people. When I was the minister, welfare people had better spending power than they had when you were there, I'll tell you. They had a hand up.

One of the things that has not been said is that since the Liberal government took over, the welfare rolls are up by 11,000—11,000 more people on welfare. More people since you took over. Those are the facts.

Hon Ms Papatello: Don't you dare lie in this House. That is crap.

Mr Baird: Those are the absolute facts. She said something unparliamentary, Speaker. I would like you to ask her to—

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the House to come to order. Would the Minister of Community and Social Services choose to withdraw her unparliamentary statement that she just made?

Hon Ms Papatello: Yes, Speaker. I'd be happy to withdraw if the minister would hold to the facts. I'm happy—

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the Minister of Community and Social Services to withdraw her unparliamentary—

Hon Ms Papatello: I withdraw my remarks, Speaker.

You will tell the truth.

The Acting Speaker: I return to the member for Nepean-Carleton.

Mr Baird: There are more people on welfare since you took over. Check your ministry's Web site. Or maybe they're not telling her. There are 11,000 more people on social assistance. Less hope, less opportunity for the future.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I would once again ask the House to come to order.

Hon Ms Papatello: Check your own stats, John.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Nepean-Carleton.

Mr Baird: Since Dalton McGuinty became Premier, we have 11,000 more people who can't find a job and who are on welfare. They're getting no help and no assistance from this Premier and this minister. They have no plan to help move people from welfare to work, no new policies, no initiatives. They have talked against Ontario Works. They've talked against work for welfare. They've talked against putting the hand up. They've given the green light to fraud artists to come and rip off the system and go back on welfare. It's outrageous: 11,000 new people on welfare since the Liberal government took over.

How big is Prescott, I say to the member for Leeds-Grenville?

Mr Runciman: It's 5,000.

Mr Baird: How big is Kemptville?

Mr Runciman: Oh, 10,000.

Mr Baird: That's almost the size of Kemptville.

I think people who are convicted of criminal offences under the federal Criminal Code should go to jail. That's my policy.

Interjection.

Mr Baird: All I know is, there are 11,000 more people on welfare, and the spending power when I was minister was greater. People had greater spending power.

Interjections.

2040

The Acting Speaker: Once again, I ask the House to come to order, please.

Mr Baird: There are 11,000 more people on welfare because the member for Windsor West has no policy to get them back to work. I say to the member for Thunder Bay, he has no policies to get people back to work. We offered people the dignity of a job, the helpful hand up, work, training opportunities, experience, the dignity that comes with being able to make a contribution in your community, the simple things about getting a recommendation letter. This government offers them nothing. They made two changes: (1) They said, if you cheat the system for \$450,000, you're allowed back on welfare immediately, as that celebrated case was in the paper; and (2) 11,000 more of them are on welfare.

The spending power of a welfare recipient was higher when I was minister than it has been since Dalton McGuinty became Premier. That is the honest truth. People could buy more when I was minister than since this Liberal government took over. And the truth hurts. Did they end the clawback? I looked in the budget bill for where they end the clawback of the national child benefit. They're not doing it. They used to say Mike Harris was the grinch when he did that. But no, they're not doing it. They're still going to claw that money back.

That's a testament to our welfare policies, which saw more than 600,000 people realize the dignity of a job, leave the rolls, move from welfare to work. I know they're still keeping the work-for-welfare policies in place. They didn't want to debate it in the election campaign because they didn't have the guts to debate it during the election campaign. They didn't have the guts to take on any welfare policy over there.

Let's look again at what Greg Sorbara said. He said on May 12, in the Toronto Sun, "I think on other occasions I have said that we are not going to be adjusting the rate of personal income tax in this province." I ask people to check their paycheques in July on the personal income tax line.

Mr Bisson: Where is it, John?

Mr Baird: I say to the members of the NDP, these guys, these folks over here, are taking a big cut this year. We're all taking a pay freeze, but the NDP members, the only members who don't want a pay hike, are all getting pay hikes this month.

Mr Bisson: Where? Where?

Mr Baird: They're all getting pay hikes this month. Howard's getting his car and driver back. Shelley won't have to drive any more. Maybe that's good.

Mr Bisson: That may well be a good thing. Come on.

Mr Baird: Maybe that's a good thing.

I want to express the huge frustration of people in my constituency—

Mr Patten: That's sexist.

Mr Baird: That's sexist? Shelley told me she had to drive Howard. So I say to the member opposite, that's an unfortunate comment and it is regrettable that he made it.

Let's look at the Toronto Star. That's the paper, with the big blue banner on the front, that used to be the friend of the Liberals. They quote Frank Graves: "It may well have been the most poorly received budget in contemporary political history in Canada." I can remember when Allan MacEachen presented his budget in 1981. He had to withdraw it, it was so bad. He had to withdraw it. A very smart, hard-working member informed me of that recently. Maybe this Liberal government will have to do it.

I also want, if I could, to pay tribute to Linda Leatherdale. Linda Leatherdale is the best friend a taxpayer has in the GTA. One of the columns she wrote last week says, "They Stabbed Us in the Back: Linda Leatherdale is fighting mad that the poor working Joe will pay much more and get a lot less for his health care dollar."

I can tell you that Linda Leatherdale is speaking for hundreds of thousands and even millions of hard-working middle-class families in Ontario and she is not going to back down. She is going to continue to struggle and fight to ensure there's some justice. We're pleased with that. I want to say to Linda Leatherdale that she's got the full support of the Conservative caucus in her tax-fighting campaign, because we are here to stand up for working families in Ontario, so we will be standing up for Linda.

I'll say this to conclude. You go right around the province and I don't know of a single member of the public who feels that they can trust the Premier. I don't know a single member of the public who feels that they can trust the Minister of Finance or that they can trust this government.

They promised to have a referendum on this issue. They're not living up to their promise. I'll tell you, we're going to have a referendum on this issue. It's going to happen on June 28. On June 28, the people of Ontario can go out and vote for a Conservative candidate, be it Gord Brown in Leeds-Grenville, Patrick Brown in Barrie, Michael Chong in Halton, John Capobianco in Etobicoke-Lakeshore, where the next Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, is tonight while we're holding down the fort here, so we're pleased with that. David Tilson, the soon-to-be-member for Dufferin-Caledon, David Turnbull, Dave Johnson in the Don Valley, will be there to fight for taxpayers federally.

Good for them for standing up and fighting for taxpayers. I say on behalf of the residents of Nepean-Carleton, your fight is our fight. We will continue to fight this.

Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

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

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

Those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be another 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2048 to 2118.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted. Take your seats.

All those opposed to Mr Baird's motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted.

Clerk of the House: The ayes are five; the nays are 26.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

I recognize the member for Nepean-Carleton.

Mr Baird: I don't want anyone to be left with the impression that the member for Trinity-Spadina wanted to work more. He voted against evening sittings, and I of course supported the government on these routine motions, as I regularly do, trying to be bipartisan and cooperative to try to assist the government of the day with their agenda.

I remember Dalton McGuinty—sorry; the Premier—made a solemn promise that we will have province-wide hearings on important pieces of legislation. I look forward to having hearings. I want to invite the committee to come to Ottawa and hear the concerns of my constituents and the member for Ottawa Centre's constituents. I want to invite them to Brockville, Midland, Orillia, Pembroke and Clarington, because this budget is bad public policy and you can make a difference by voting against it.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Marchese: First of all, I want to say that I really wanted to speak tonight. It's 9:30. Twenty minutes is all I'm asking, and we didn't get that chance. That was my only regret.

I do want to praise John Baird's speech, the member for Nepean-Carleton. It was a good speech, I thought, generally. And it's so nice to see John with the NDP, working together, fighting for the poor, fighting for the disenfranchised, fighting for seniors. It's just so beautiful to see. It's amazing what opposition can do. Repent, sinners. We're working together. John, isn't it interesting—John, I'm talking to you—that this budget measure that the Liberals have taken is something that even the Tories would not have contemplated? Isn't that interesting?

Mr Baird: True.

Mr Marchese: I hear it said, and I don't really know, that some Liberal MPPs are afraid to go and canvass. I hear it said; I don't know. I don't believe they're frightened to go and defend this budget, because Mr Sorbara, the Minister of Finance, is proud of this budget; Dalton McGuinty, the Premier, is proud of this budget. Although some people say the MPPs are frightened to go out and canvass, I don't believe that. I am sure they're out there knocking on their doors, defending this budget, because there are nuggets in this budget that people do

not know about and they need to go out and defend it. If it's untrue that you're not canvassing, tell them. You've got a great budget here. Go and defend it. John, you have to help them out, please.

Mr Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): The member for Nepean-Carleton had many tragic stories about this budget that are taking place in his constituency. Let me tell you about the tragic story that happened in my riding and that was caused by that government, that previous government that did not add one cent to mental health. We're adding \$65 million this year and another \$25 million for children's mental health.

Interjections.

Mr Fonseca: Two months ago, member for Nepean-Carleton, tragedy happened in my riding. An individual was stabbed to death in my riding two months ago because of a young man who's a schizophrenic who has not gotten any help in eight years, and he did stab somebody to death in my riding. Shame on you.

His mother and father were in my office, crying, saying the system had let them down. The system had let them down because they had been in hospital, and after 48 hours their son was let out of hospital. What did they say to them? "Your son would actually have to cause bodily harm to someone else or to himself to be able to get a bed in a mental health institution."

Now their son is at the Queen Street mental health institution, and this will cost our system millions of dollars. Because that government did not provide the social services to their son, they have brought tragedy upon this family and they have cost the taxpayers of this province, by not being preventive, millions of dollars. Shame on that government for letting this province down. Shame on you.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): I really must stand and put on the record that there is an outstanding crowd here tonight, and I think it's out of respect for the member from Nepean-Carleton, obviously a future leader, either provincially or federally. He did hold you to account. In fact, most of the ministers he cited have left. I think the reason they left is because he touched on the truth, which is strange for them.

If you listen to the debate, the broken promises and all the other terms that have been used—I'm looking at several letters I've received, but I'm just going to read this: "I therefore take it that there is about a \$5-billion risk in the budget." This was said by Gerry Phillips at the standing committee in June 2003.

Here's another one, by Dalton McGuinty, on September 11, 2003: "We're also saying that should the need arise, we will slow down the rate at which we go ahead with our promises, but we will not raise taxes and we will certainly not run a deficit."

So the cynicism has been struck here today. They certainly don't want the truth on the record. It's my understanding that Dalton promised—he disappointed the people, not just in the riding of Durham, but the member from Nepean-Carleton has touched on it with living examples of his constituents who simply can't pay the

new health tax. These are the real people, the hard-working people of Ontario whom we're elected to represent—perhaps the people to whom you never explained your platform, and now you've actually disappointed them.

The member from Leeds-Grenville today made the most passionate plea, I think, did a press release on it and actually cornered the Premier. I'm sure the Premier is offended and hurt by it, because it's the truth. He put his hand on the Bible—it's sort of like those ads: "I promise not to raise your taxes." You can't trust them.

Mr McNeely: I'd like to get around again to those new debts the province got in the last eight years: schools, \$8 billion; roads, \$4 billion; bridges, \$3 billion; energy—that was that former minister there—\$10 billion, and no new production in the last few years. The total is \$25 billion. This backlog is probably higher than \$25 billion. This is typical, whether it's health care, education, energy or transportation, they saved money for eight years and left a mess in this province: a mess in crumbling schools, crumbling bridges, potholed roads and, worst of all, a \$32-billion debt on hydro, plus no new investment in infrastructure there for two years.

We have a tough budget, and it will impact Ontarians. But we are cleaning up after a demolition crew that was making decisions for eight years in this province left us a social deficit, a service deficit and an infrastructure deficit, plus \$6.2 billion in 2003. This is maintenance not done. It's \$25 billion. It's the same as debt. It may be worse, because if you don't do your maintenance, your costs escalate.

Therefore, after eight years of Tory government we have added \$21 billion to the debt in the 1990s, \$6 billion in debt in 2003 and an equivalent debt of \$25 billion because of neglecting our infrastructure, for a grand total of \$52 billion in eight years. You can lower the taxes, but if you don't pay your bills, they come back to haunt you, and that's where we are—and they conned Ontarians into thinking they were good managers.

Revenues must equal expenses, and our tough budget and our four-year plan will put Ontario back into condition, especially with the programs announced by the Prime Minister recently: sharing the gas tax, forgiving the GST and the major infrastructure announcement. The federal-provincial-municipal team will bring back the public infrastructure so essential to our quality of life in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Nepean-Carleton has two minutes to reply.

Mr Baird: I want to thank the member for Durham for his usual wisdom. We've come to expect that. I want to thank the member for Trinity-Spadina. The member for Trinity-Spadina has never stood in his place and congratulated me on a speech in the eight years I've been here, except for tonight, and I'm pleased.

Mr Marchese: I always do that.

Mr Baird: I say to the member for Trinity-Spadina: You're the inspiration. He is the most eloquent member of the House

My friend the member for Ottawa-Orléans said no new energy plants were built in Ontario. He should go to Windsor and look at the Brighton Beach plant: 500 megawatts. He should go to Sarnia and look at the new TransAlta facility: 500 megawatts. He should go to Bruce county and see the 1,500 megawatts of new power. He should go to Durham and see the 500 megawatts. He should look at Huron Wind, the first commercial wind energy company in the province. There are lots of new energy plants. The member should speak to what he knows.

Interjections.

Mr Baird: I say to the Minister of Public Infrastructure: You never had to bring your credit card to a chiropractor or to an optometrist when we were in government. You never had to bring your Amex card to a health care facility.

To the member for Mississauga East, I thank him for his intervention in the debate. When Jack Layton went after Prime Minister Paul Martin with respect to home-

lessness, I thought it was regrettable and unfortunate, and I think your comments are in that same regard.

I want to wait for the opportunity that Ontarians will have to cast their ballot in this referendum on June 28—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I would ask the government members not to count down. That's showing profound disrespect for the House. I will allow the member for Nepean-Carleton to conclude his remarks.

Mr Baird: Thank you, Speaker. I can't believe the members opposite are showing disrespect like that. I'm truly shocked.

Members will have the opportunity on June 28 to cast their ballot. They will have their opportunity on June 28 to choose change by electing Stephen Harper as the next Prime Minister.

The Acting Speaker: It being past 9:30, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 in the afternoon.

The House adjourned at 2131.

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