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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 6 December 2004**

**Lundi 6 décembre 2004**

Speaker  
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président  
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk  
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier  
Claude L. DesRosiers

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 6 December 2004

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 6 décembre 2004

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### ESTIMATES

**Hon Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I have a message from the Honourable Lieutenant Governor signed by his own hand.

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates and supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2005, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### ARTHRITIS

**Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** The number of people with arthritis in our province has increased in only seven years by 23%, affecting over 1.6 million citizens who today live with the daily pain and disability of arthritis. In the next 20 years, people with arthritis will increase by 2.8 million, or more than one in five Ontarians. As arthritis claims more victims, the increased demand for hip and knee replacement surgery will mushroom over those years.

The Arthritis Society, whose members are here today in the Legislature to mark Arthritis Day, has confirmed that people with arthritis are not getting the care they need to manage their disease and minimize the pain and disability it causes. They ask the government to provide improved access for arthritis sufferers to early diagnosis, disease information, self-management education, specialist care, rehabilitation, and medication to reduce pain. What is also needed is the development of a province-wide strategy to improve access to programs and services for the prevention and management of arthritis. The society has established a 12-point agenda to improve arthritis care in Ontario.

On Arthritis Day, I would like to salute the members of the Arthritis Society for all their dedicated hard work on behalf of arthritis sufferers and to join with them in calling on the government to take arthritis seriously by moving forward to implement the society's 12-point plan to properly address the prevention and management of this painful disease.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** Today is Arthritis Day at the Legislature, and I'd like to acknowledge representatives from the Arthritis Society, including Sheila Renton, Jessie MacIsaac and Helen Cotnam from Sudbury, as well as the 1.6 million Ontarians currently living with the disease.

Arthritis is the second most prevalent chronic condition in Ontario, resulting in more pain and disability than any other chronic disease. In 2001, one in six Ontarians reported having arthritis. By 2026, 2.8 million Ontarians will have the ailment, with the largest increases among adults over 55. More than 50% of people with arthritis reported long-term disability. For those under 55, almost twice the proportion of people with arthritis than any other chronic condition reported long-term disability. Nearly one in three people of working age with arthritis, compared to one in seven people with other chronic conditions, reported being without a job in the previous year, contributing to a significant cost of \$4.4 billion a year.

Despite the huge need, health services have been static since 1997, while the incidence of arthritis is increasing at the rate of 1% per year. The Arthritis Society, with over 50 years in the arthritis rehabilitation and education business, has proposed an ambitious 12-point agenda to improve arthritis care in Ontario. There are three key areas: Reduce wait times and increase capacity for joint replacement surgery; develop and implement an arthritis prevention and management strategy for Ontario; ensure access to early diagnosis and treatment for inflammatory arthritis.

I applaud the efforts of the society in raising awareness and I urge this government to implement the recommendations so this looming health care crisis can be averted.

#### VOLUNTEERS

**Ms Laurel C. Broten (Etobicoke-Lakeshore):** Yesterday, December 5, was International Volunteer Day. The invaluable contributions that are made every year by the millions of volunteers across the world and the almost 2.5 million right here in Ontario come in the true spirit of kindness and an unwavering commitment to caring for others.

The selfless and noble acts performed in Ontario contribute over 390 million hours and almost \$6 billion to our economy annually. Our government values these contributions and promotes and recognizes volunteers through several initiatives, such as the Volunteer Service

Awards, the Outstanding Achievement Awards, the Senior Achievement Awards and the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers.

Today, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to a few of the thousands of volunteers in my riding of Etobicoke-Lakeshore: Tony Panzuto, Dwane McDonald and Jeannie Robinson, of the Etobicoke-Lakeshore Housing Task Force—thank you for your ideas; Elizabeth Sloan, Chelsea Takalo and Tiffany Jiminez at LAMP—thank you for your compassion. Allan Ritchie, Christine Campbell, Tina Blandford, Jim and Jennifer Saunderson, Arden Lambe, Wendy Gamble, and all of the volunteers whom I have not had a chance to recognize here in my minute and a half, thank you for building a better community in Etobicoke-Lakeshore. Thank you for your hard work each and every day.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr John Yakabuski (Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke):** Not long ago, the Minister of Children and Youth Services announced what was called the Best Start plan for preschool students in Ontario. The problem I've got with that is that it's a laudable goal but, like so many Liberal announcements, it's not backed up with the money.

The other question I have is, do these people over there ever talk? If the minister had been speaking to the Minister of Education, she might have known that in my riding we haven't had half-day busing for 15 years because the funding hasn't been there. We need the announcements to be backed up with the money.

The Minister of Education has promised a new funding formula for school busing. In my riding, we have the oldest fleet and the lowest-paid drivers and operators in the province. We are closing bus routes every year, with more to be scheduled for 2005. I say to the minister, I implore you to get together with your advisers and come up with a funding formula that addresses the needs in rural Ontario.

The minister must know that our students are just as important as the students everywhere else in the province. We are not second-class citizens; we should no longer be treated like them.

#### BRAMPTON FIREFIGHTERS

**Mrs Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre):** I rise today a very proud Brampton resident because of an important achievement by a local firefighter named Captain Peter Reid. For those who may not know it, Brampton has one of the best fire departments in the world, and they have the awards to prove it.

The fire department combat team has dominated the most gruelling firefighter competition in the world, the World Firefighter Combat Challenge. In this competition, the Brampton combat team competes in an obstacle course against more than 100 teams and 700 of the best firefighters on the planet.

#### 1340

The excellence of the Brampton fire department is demonstrated by their performance over the past decade. For example, the Brampton fire department won the championship in 1996, took second place in 1997, first place in 1998 and first place again in 1999. Not only has the Brampton fire department consistently dominated this international competition, but the Brampton firefighter combat team has won the Canadian championships at least five times.

This year, the Brampton combat team won the 2004 over-40 Canadian championship with a world record time. Most recently, captain Peter Reid broke the over-40 world record and finished first in the World Combat Firefighter Challenge. This is just another example of the professional, highly trained and determined people who protect my community from fire every day.

I offer congratulations to the members of the Brampton firefighter combat team, and I commend Brampton firefighters for their commitment to good training and dedication, which Brampton firefighters have demonstrated for more than 150 years.

#### VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS

**Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** Today the parents, family and friends of 16-year-old Andrew Stewart are mourning his tragic and violent death. On behalf of all members of the Legislature, I extend our condolences.

According to reports, Andrew lost his young life attempting to defend his friend against a gang of thugs just steps from the East York Collegiate school, where Andrew was a student. While crisis counsellors today are attempting to help Andrew's friends to deal with their grief and their fears, the community and this Legislature have a responsibility to address the underlying issues that have led to this tragedy.

The Toronto Sun's Kim Bradley reported, "Parents of some students at East York Collegiate warned the school about the brewing violence weeks before Andrew was slain." The parents want it to be known that they contacted the school to report incidents of bullying at the school, and as one mother said, "They have done nothing."

This is not an isolated case. I bring to the attention of the Minister of Education another serious issue involving a 14-year-old student at Mother Teresa High School in Ottawa. The boy's parents have pleaded with the school to ensure a safe and secure environment for their son, and their appeal is being ignored. I will ask that a page deliver this letter from the parents of this student to the Minister of Education at his desk here in the Legislature, and I ask that the minister personally intervene to ensure this child's safety.

I'm also calling on the Minister of Education to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that every principal, every teacher, every administrator in our school system treats bullying as a serious issue and that every school has a prescribed response protocol for this serious issue.

### ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURIES

**Mr David Zimmer (Willowdale):** It's my pleasure to rise in the House today to speak on behalf of Ontarians with acquired brain injuries and the dedicated men and women in the community-based agencies who work so tirelessly on their behalf.

As members from all sides of this House know, the Ontario Association for Community Based Boards of Acquired Brain Injury Services is hosting their annual MPP reception in the Legislature tonight. I would encourage all my colleagues to attend and show their support for the clients, their families and the service providers in this important sector.

One of the agencies that provide valuable residential and outpatient services to people with acquired brain injury is located in my riding of Willowdale. Community Head Injury Resource Services of Toronto, CHIRS, is an organization that does wonderful work in this area. I have had the pleasure of visiting with the clients and staff at CHIRS and was touched by the good work that takes place there. Many of the people who are cared for by CHIRS have few, if any, alternatives.

I am sure that all members will join me in welcoming the acquired brain injury community to the Legislative Assembly today.

### ARTHRITIS

**Mr John Milloy (Kitchener Centre):** I'd like to bring your attention to some of the visitors you will find in our gallery representing the Arthritis Society, led by their executive director, Jo-Anne Sobie.

Arthritis is a chronic condition that affects one in seven adults and one in 1,000 children. Individuals affected live with the daily pain and disability of arthritis.

The Arthritis Society is a multidisciplinary and integrated team, including occupational and physiotherapists, social workers, managers and program support staff and 435 program volunteers, that provides invaluable services, treatments and education programs for people with arthritis.

Within my community, Sue MacQueen and Judy McKague are two of the invaluable occupational therapists who assist community members each day. I would like to acknowledge Judy and Sue, whom I had the pleasure to meet with a short time ago, along with their colleague Lynne Tintse and a brave young spokesperson, Tricia Riddell, and her mother. I would also like to acknowledge Tom Millen, the president of the Kitchener-Waterloo Arthritis Association, and Shirley Mitchell, who runs the office each day. The society reaches close to 150,000 Ontarians with arthritis through its Web site, a 1-800 information line, print materials and self-management programs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Arthritis Society for their dedication to this cause and ask all members of the House to join me to

acknowledge their efforts in treating and educating others about this chronic condition.

### SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

**Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex):** Today will be the third and final reading of Bill 73, the Highway Traffic Statute Law Amendment Act. I'd like to highlight to all members that this is an extremely important bill dealing with highway safety for Ontario's children. This is a bill that, if passed, will make sure that Ontario's youngest citizens arrive safely at school in the morning and arrive safely home at night.

When parents see their kids off in the morning, they are putting a fundamental trust in the public education system, a trust that their children will be transported safely to and from school. To that end, we are putting a new school bus safety measure forward.

This enhancement in the school bus law would not have been possible without the support of Colleen and Larry Marcuzzi and Ginny and Ed Loxton. For over eight years, they stuck by me. They were never discouraged and they never gave up. I can never thank them enough for their courage and selflessness. They came forward to share their personal tragedies with the public in order to spare other families the nightmare and pain that these two families had to endure. I will forever be grateful for their help, perseverance and friendship.

This government recognizes that we have an important duty in protecting the lives of our children. That is why I'm asking for support of this bill from all members in the House. I encourage you to join me in voting in favour of this bill today.

### VISITORS

**Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In the members' gallery we have the Car Seat Safety Committee of Haldimand-Norfolk that worked on Bill 73. Please join me in welcoming Karin Marks, Joanne Alessi and Kim Henzy.

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** That's not a point of order.

### MOTIONS

#### HOUSE SITTINGS

**Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 pm to 9:30 pm on Monday, December 6, 2004, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** The government House leader has moved government notice of motion number 258. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS

**Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I am proud to stand in the House today to talk about our government's plan to improve access to front-line care in communities across the province.

Today, I had the opportunity to make an announcement at the Escarpment Primary Care Network, a place that is at the heart of community care in Hamilton. This is a place where physicians work together with nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers, mental health workers, dietitians and others and provide comprehensive care to their patients. This is a place that takes prevention as seriously as treating illness. It provides the kind of cradle-to-grave care that more and more patients and their providers are looking for in the province of Ontario.

Government is a steadfast defender of medicare. We believe it's the best expression of our Canadian values, and it does a relatively effective job of making sure Ontarians get the quality care they need. But we all know that it's far from perfect. In many ways, it's still a work in progress.

For one thing, Ontario's health care system really doesn't operate as a real system; it's more of a loose collection of all too often uncoordinated services, and we all know that too many patients slip through the cracks. Too many patients feel as if they are being shunted from one provider to another without any one professional or team looking out for them. Most urgent of all, one million Ontarians are without a family doctor—one who knows their health history, advocates on their behalf and coordinates their care—and 142 communities in our province are underserved, which means they have inadequate access to basic health care services. This is an unacceptable state of affairs, and our government is determined to fix it.

**1350**

Our government has been moving forward this year with a plan to build strong community-based health care, because we believe that the very best health care is found close to home. The cornerstone of our plan is creating front-line primary health care teams, a model that we call family health teams. Our government is investing \$600 million over the next four years to create 150 family health teams to bring comprehensive front-line primary care to 2.5 million Ontarians. These will be teams of doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, pharmacists and other health professionals who deliver a full range of health care services to people after hours, 24/7.

We all know that people don't get sick conveniently between the hours of 9 and 5. Far too many people end up queuing up in emergency rooms because their local clinic closes down in the evening. Others in the same situation risk letting a cough become bronchitis or a sore turn into an infection. They might go to work or school

without getting the proper care or medication and put others at risk of getting sick as well.

Members of a family health team arrange their work schedules so they can provide after-hours care and weekend coverage for each other's patients. And they provide comprehensive care. Prevention and health promotion are as important as treating minor ailments and managing serious, chronic diseases.

Health care is the most basic, most human endeavour, and the very best kind of health care comes from people working together. Family health teams allow patients to benefit from the combined talents of different health care providers.

Diabetes is a textbook example of why primary health care teams work. Diabetes is a complicated condition that requires a combination of treatment and prevention measures, including medications to control blood sugar levels, dietary support and assistance to manage a host of symptoms including eyesight problems, heart disease and foot problems. Here's what the Canadian Diabetes Association said in a recent letter to me: "The Canadian Diabetes Association strongly supports the evidence that diabetes care is most effective when it is organized around a multidisciplinary diabetes health care team." I don't imagine anyone here disagrees with the idea; it just makes sense.

The family health team concept is attractive to many doctors and other health care professionals because it allows them to share their workload, have greater flexibility and balance their work and home lives. If you talk to providers who are part of a team practice, many will tell you that they were sceptical at beginning; they thought it would be difficult to get used to and that they might lose income. Instead, what they discover is that they get paid and supported for spending more time with their patients and delivering the kind of care that they know their patients need. Family health teams will build on successful teams, like the Escarpment Primary Care Network. They will be created from the bottom up and respond to the distinct needs of the patients and the local community they are established to serve. No one family health team will be exactly alike.

More and more family doctors and other professionals are seizing on the opportunity to practise in teams. In fact, we have already received 100 unsolicited expressions of interest from groups across the province interested in setting up family health teams. Some 3,500 family physicians are already choosing to practise in one of the existing primary care models and bring care to 2.8 million Ontario patients.

I had the pleasure of announcing today another milestone in our plan to build family health teams. Communities across Ontario can now apply to establish the first 45 family health teams. These first 45 family health teams are expected to serve up to 650,000 people when they are fully up and running—

*Applause.*

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** —and they have one strong supporter in the Liberal back bench—

*Applause.*

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** —and more all the time. Evidence of the strong, growing support for family health teams is found here today on the floor of the Ontario Legislature.

Importantly, over the next few months we will be working with communities across the province on their applications, and we will approve and announce the first 45 locations early in 2005. Dr Jim MacLean, lead of primary care on the government's health results team, has just begun travelling from one end of the province to the other to inform communities about how to apply for and set up a family health team. Interested groups will be provided with tools and hands-on support to develop their applications.

We also announced that we have established a family health team action group to help communities design and implement family health teams, headed by Dr Ruth Wilson, the former head of family medicine at Queen's University.

**Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** I appointed her.

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** Yes, the former government appointed Dr Ruth Wilson, and they made a very, very good choice in so doing—something I've had the opportunity to say many, many times.

The action group that Dr Wilson is leading includes representatives from the Ontario College of Family Physicians, the Ontario Medical Association, the Professional Association of Internes and Residents of Ontario, the Ontario Hospital Association, the Nurse Practitioner Association of Ontario, the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, the Ontario Pharmacists' Association, the Association of Ontario Health Centres, and a mental health/social work group to ensure that we get input from a wide range of disciplines.

The McGuinty government is moving forward so that all Ontarians have access to the high-quality care they need, whenever they need it and where they need it. Ontarians have waited on too many governments for far too long. We're getting on with the job of making the changes we were elected to provide, and we're making these changes together with health professionals and with communities all across the breadth of this vast province. Some 12 million Ontarians are counting on us to do so. Thank you very much.

**Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton):** I listened with great interest to the statement by our colleague the Minister of Health with respect to this groundbreaking announcement that he made this morning. I thought it was actually a pretty good announcement, and then I remembered that Elizabeth Witmer, when she was Minister of Health back in the year 2000, made a very similar announcement. But this is a context.

The previous government made this announcement in a rather different context. It was actually part of the 2000 OMA agreement. You know, agreement, where you work with physicians and the government and you come to a collective decision? But this minister cannot seem to come to an agreement with physicians in Ontario, because he wants to bully them.

These family health teams were first negotiated as part of the last agreement, working together with Dr Ruth Wilson in her appointment by Elizabeth Witmer, the former Minister of Health:

"Family health networks will be encouraged," through the budget in the year 2000, "throughout Ontario in accordance with the April 2000 framework agreement between the ... (OMA) and the provincial government. A total of \$250 million was committed in the budget that year to support this effort, with \$100 million of this amount for the provision of incentives for family physicians to change from fee-for-service payments to population-based funding."

This minister wants to once again talk about his agreement, talk about great announcements, instead of getting back to the table and talking once again with Ontario physicians.

I looked in papers right around the province of Ontario this past weekend and read the disgust—even many of the groups that supported the initial agreement that failed are angry at this government and their tactics in dealing with Ontario's physicians.

Look at the Ottawa Sun. "Docs Ready to Battle Liberals," the article says. "Ontario's physicians are beginning to mobilize against the Liberal government's final offer.... 'Doctors have acted in good faith during negotiations and believe we deserve the opportunity to work with the government,'" and many other physicians are coming out.

I look at the section on pediatrics, those physicians in the province of Ontario who look after our children, and what they say about this agreement. They are tremendously angry with this government and the way they're dealing with physicians. Here are the concerns that they have for physician services and the provision of services, particularly to our youngest, most vulnerable citizens. They note the following: "There is no enhancement of counselling fees for children with serious behaviour and developmental disorders such as autism, cerebral palsy, global development delay and learning disabilities."

Once again, this government takes a whack at children with autism. You could say a lot of things about the previous government, but no one on this side of the House ever lied to an autistic child. We never lied to an autistic child. You can say to the member for Nickel Belt—she's never lied to an autistic child, and we're quite proud of that.

**1400**

But let's look at what the section on pediatrics says. "Waiting times will not be improved" for the youngest citizens of the province of Ontario because of their disagreement. "The Section on Pediatrics is at a loss to understand why the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care would not see fit to give children with chronic disease the same benefits as adults with chronic disease"—tremendously concerned. They go on: "By excluding pediatricians from your proposed health care teams, the front-line care of thousands of children will be in jeopardy."

I see the minister doesn't want to make reference to that today. Instead he takes a reannouncement, a four-year-old reannouncement by the previous government, and he wants the status quo. He is not prepared to stand up and to agree that he has made a terrible mistake and just simply agree to sit down with Ontario physicians and to try to give negotiations a final opportunity. They met 122 times, they continue to say. All we're asking them is to sit down one more time and give it an extra go. But that is unlikely.

Look at what Ontario physicians said about this government just last week. The Ontario Medical Association "are unanimous in their indignation and rejection of the process and tactics" of this government, that they have unilaterally imposed "a new contract on Ontario's 24,000 doctors." Going on, in Dr John Rapin's words, "It was apparent at" the meeting you held with them "that your government had no intention of working with" the OMA.

It's time this minister put away his boxing gloves and sat down to work constructively with Ontario physicians.

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** In responding to the minister, I want to pick up near the end of the statement where he said, with respect to primary health care, that Ontarians have waited on too many governments for far too long.

I was very proud to be part of a government that established 21 new community health centres in the province of Ontario during our time in office. I was proud to be part of a government that established nine aboriginal healing and wellness centres, which are essentially aboriginal community health centres, because those centres made a tremendous difference in the lives of many people in many communities who were trying to access primary health care. This responded to a very direct and a very clear need for those people to get primary health care.

For the life of me, I don't understand why the government doesn't use a model that has been effective, that has worked, and just expand the number of community health centres in Ontario in order to respond to community needs. That would make sense.

Now, CHCs have been in existence for over 30 years in Ontario. They are run by local community boards, which take into account the particular health needs of the community they represent and establish their programs and services to respond to those health care needs.

I wonder if the family health teams that the government is going to put in place will have community-run, local boards. That is key to the effective running of community health centres. We know that local control means that boards can respond effectively and in a timely fashion to the needs that come from the community. Those needs can be very diverse, can be very different, can be linguistic needs that need to be responded to, can be the needs of very difficult populations that people have to respond to—HIV/AIDS clients, for example. Community boards can do that, and it will be interesting to see if the government will use what has been an

effective strategy from CHCs and implement those with the family health teams, namely the community boards.

We know that CHCs already draw on and effectively use the skills and expertise of many health care providers. Community health centres already have a broad range of health care professionals: physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers, dietitians, community health workers—any number of health care providers who bring their skills, bring their expertise, bring their scope of practice to the community health centre and work together in a team to ensure that people get the health care they need from the health care professional who is best suited to provide it. Each of them uses all of their talents in this model, each of them is paid on salary and each of them ensures not only that they are delivering treatment in response to a health care need, but that the team is also involved in initiatives with respect to health care promotion, with respect to illness prevention, with respect to the maintenance of chronic illnesses like diabetes and arthritis. Those are things that community health centres already do, and most of them already ensure that there is a health care provider who is on call 24/7 to respond to the needs of the local community.

What's interesting is that about four years ago, the Ministry of Health did an internal review of community health centres to determine how they were functioning in the province. I can tell you that the results of that review were very positive. This was done by the Ministry of Health itself. On every level, the ministry concluded that community health centres do respond effectively and fully to the primary health care needs of Ontarians. Why on earth, in the face of a review that is now four years old and that clearly shows how important and effective CHCs are as a model for primary health care reform, would the government be looking to now another model to deliver primary health care in the province? It makes no sense.

There are over 80 communities now that have proposals into the Ministry of Health for community health centres. I say to the minister and this government, fund those communities now. We have a model that is effective. We have a model that has been proven. We have a model that the Ministry of Health supports. Why doesn't this government support community health centres and get on with the business of funding them now?

## DEFERRED VOTES

### GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING ACT, 2004

### LOI DE 2004 SUR LA PUBLICITÉ GOUVERNEMENTALE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 25, An Act respecting government advertising / Projet de loi 25, Loi concernant la publicité gouvernementale.



**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1407 to 1412.*

**The Speaker:** Mr Phillips has moved third reading of Bill 25, An Act respecting government advertising.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Gravelle, Michael	Phillips, Gerry
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Bentley, Christopher	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Kennedy, Gerard	Ramsay, David
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kular, Kuldip	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Broten, Laurel C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Brown, Michael A.	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Bryant, Michael	Marsales, Judy	Smitherman, George
Caplan, David	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Watson, Jim
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Dombrowsky, Leona	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wong, Tony C.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Fonseca, Peter	Mitchell, Carol	Zimmer, David
Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve	

**The Speaker:** All those against, please rise and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Nays

Arnott, Ted	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Baird, John R.	Marchese, Rosario	Sterling, Norman W.
Barrett, Toby	Martel, Shelley	Tascona, Joseph N.
Hardeman, Ernie	Martiniuk, Gerry	Witmer, Elizabeth
Horwath, Andrea	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Jackson, Cameron	O'Toole, John	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 50; the nays are 17.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

### HIGHWAY TRAFFIC STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (CHILD AND YOUTH SAFETY), 2004

### LOI DE 2004 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (SÉCURITÉ DES ENFANTS ET DES JEUNES)

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 73, An Act to enhance the safety of children and youth on Ontario's roads / Projet de loi 73, Loi visant à accroître la sécurité des enfants et des jeunes sur les routes de l'Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1415 to 1420.*

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

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John
Arthurs, Wayne	Horwath, Andrea	Peters, Steve
Baird, John R.	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Cameron	Prue, Michael
Bartolucci, Rick	Jeffrey, Linda	Pupatello, Sandra
Bentley, Christopher	Kennedy, Gerard	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Klees, Frank	Ramsay, David
Bountrogianni, Marie	Kular, Kuldip	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Broten, Laurel C.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Brown, Michael A.	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Bryant, Michael	Marchese, Rosario	Smitherman, George
Caplan, David	Marsales, Judy	Sterling, Norman W.
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Martel, Shelley	Takhar, Harinder S.
Churley, Marilyn	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tascona, Joseph N.
Crozier, Bruce	Matthews, Deborah	Van Bommel, Maria
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Watson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Duncan, Dwight	McNeely, Phil	Witmer, Elizabeth
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wong, Tony C.
Fonseca, Peter	Miller, Norm	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Gerretsen, John	Milloy, John	Yakabuski, John
Gravelle, Michael	Mitchell, Carol	Zimmer, David

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 69; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

### DAY OF REMEMBRANCE AND ACTION ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

**Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** On a point of order, Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent for each party to speak for up to five minutes in memory of the Montreal massacre victims. I believe we also have unanimous consent to wear the buttons in respect of that.

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Do we have unanimous consent as requested by the government House leader? Agreed.

**Hon Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I rise today in memory of 14 young women who were murdered at l'École polytechnique in Montreal 15 years ago today. These young women, who had so much to live for, so much to offer, were murdered because they were women. None of these innocent women should have died. We mourn each tragic and senseless loss.

Today, I attended events of remembrance—and they are legion across the province—at Mount Sinai this morning, health professionals getting together to talk about their role on the front lines of protecting women against domestic violence; at Women's College Health Sciences Centre, a wonderful service of remembrance for the 14 women who died; and at George Brown College, the students and faculty together discussing their role in our future in changing attitudes in Ontario and the world to protect women against violence.

Today is the national Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. The United Nations, in its Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, recognizes that violence against women

allows for a power imbalance and is a mechanism to force women into a subordinate position compared with men. Violence against women impoverishes society economically, politically and culturally by limiting the active role that women can make in the development of our communities.

Despite its pervasiveness, violence against women is not natural or inevitable. Preventing violence against women requires us to challenge the cultural attitudes and stereotypes that diminish women's equality and to promote equality in all areas of a woman's life. We must transform systems, institutions, attitudes and behaviours.

This government is committed to action on the issue of violence against women to achieve real, positive change. I'm proud to be associated with a government that sees violence against women as a priority and to step behind our leader, Dalton McGuinty, as he leads that charge.

On Thursday of last week, I was proud to be in attendance at the Canadian Women's Foundation as they launched a strategy to further involve the public sector with the private sector on issues of domestic violence. This strategy involves raising funds from the private sector to assist in the violence against women prevention movement. A safer environment for women and their children won't be created by any single action or by government acting alone. It will be created because of a concerted and coordinated effort across all sectors of society.

Women's organizations have worked hard to raise awareness of violence against women. Networks that have been created at the local, provincial, national and international levels have inspired a wide range of campaigns and have brought the issue of violence against women front and centre. Since 1991, YWCA Canada has distributed rose buttons to mark Canada's national Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women each December 6. Over 200,000 buttons have been distributed to schools, shelters, places of work and individuals across Canada.

I have with me here for all of us in the House our own rose buttons. I invite all of us to pick them up and wear them today and on to demonstrate your commitment to ending violence against women. Together, we've got to ensure that a massacre like the one in Montreal never happens again.

As I close, I'd ask all of you to rise with me as we read the 14 names of those women who died and those who were lost to us so tragically: Geneviève Bergeron, Hélène Colgan, Nathalie Croteau, Barbara Daigneault, Anne-Marie Edward, Maud Haviernick, Barbara Klucznik Widajewicz, Maryse Laganière, Maryse Leclair, Anne-Marie Lemay, Sonia Pelletier, Michèle Richard, Annie St-Arneault and Annie Turcotte.

We'll stand in our places today and do our part to see that this doesn't happen again.

**Mrs Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** I am pleased to join my colleagues from the other two parties in recognizing today, December 6, as the national Day of

Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada.

Established in 1991 by the Parliament of Canada, this day coincides with the anniversary of the deaths of 14 young women who were tragically murdered 15 years ago, on December 6, 1989, at École polytechnique in Montreal. The 14 young women were killed in a senseless act of violence simply because of their gender.

Regrettably, today, 15 years later, violence against women continues. It is not enough for us to just remember all the women who live daily with the threat of violence or who have died as a result of deliberate acts of gender-based violence. We must work for change. We must commit ourselves to eradicating violence against women.

#### 1430

The current statistics are unacceptable. According to the Government of Canada Status of Women Web site, over three quarters, 77%, of reported victims of criminal harassment in 2000 were women. Of the almost 34,000 victims of spousal violence reported in 2000, women accounted for the majority of victims, 85%, a total of 28,633 victims. In 2001, 86 persons were killed by a current or ex-spouse. Four of five victims of spousal homicide were female. There were 69 women, compared to 17 men. In addition to those killed by a spouse, six women were killed by a current or ex-boyfriend. These statistics speak to the need to do more to end the violence. All women in this province, this country and this world deserve the right to live without fear.

We need to continue to educate people, and we need to continue to change attitudes and behaviours that, no matter how casual or seemingly innocent, do contribute to the continuation of violent and abusive behaviour against women. Moreover, violence against women carries heavy consequences for those who are victims and for society in general. For the victims of violence, there are psychological consequences along with the physical. We know that girls and boys who witness or experience violence in the home are at high risk of becoming victims and/or abusers later in life.

As a community and a society, the fear of aggression is present not only in the lives of victims of violence but also in the lives of far too many other women. How many women do you know who will not travel alone, who worry about waiting for or using public transportation alone after dark, or who are afraid to walk home alone in the evening? According to the statistics, there are far too many.

Today, as we remember and observe a moment of silence to the memory of those 14 young women, and all women killed as a result of violence, let us not only reaffirm our commitment in this House and this province to end violence against women, but let us personally reflect on the actions we can take as individuals to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women in the future.

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** It was 15 years ago today that a 25-year-old man walked into the

University of Montreal's school of engineering building carrying a semi-automatic rifle. He walked into the classroom, shouting, "I want the women." He separated the men from the women, ordered the men to leave, and lined the women up along an execution wall. "You are all feminists," he yelled, and he began shooting. As we all know, by the end of his rampage he had murdered 14 women and injured 13 others, mostly women. This is one of the most tragic mass shootings in Canadian history. These killings shook us to the core and brought to the forefront how common it actually is, in a tragic way, for women in this nation to face threats to their safety and prosperity simply because they are women.

Today being the 15th day of remembrance for the lives lost, I just returned with other colleagues from Women's College Hospital, where once again I partook in a vigil to honour and mourn these 14 women. Today I held a rose representing the life and memory of Anne-Marie Edward. Every year such tributes and the other events leading to it transport me, and I'm sure many of us, back to when we first learned what had transpired. I relive the acute horror, anger and agony we felt that day and the days after. I also remember how in the immediate days, weeks, months following the murders, an urgency set in to root out the causes of violence and discrimination against women. It is natural after such a tragedy to seek some meaningful change.

In the years following, however, violence against women remains a prevalent and growing crisis while efforts to end it have suffered setbacks. There is a troubling rise in sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace. The occurrence of sexual assault has also increased, particularly incidents involving younger women as the victims. Women between the ages of 16 and 21 face the highest risk of experiencing sexual violence.

Since December 6, 1989, we have seen two high-profile coroners' inquests in Ontario involving homicides stemming from domestic assault. On average, one woman in Ontario will be killed in a domestic homicide every week.

This past year, there was a disturbing T-shirt available for purchase, showing a sledgehammer and the phrase, "She deserved it." Supporters of the T-shirt characterized it as "a joke," and one scoffed at criticism by telling media that no one would really smash someone's head with a hammer. While the shirt was removed from storefronts following protests, a woman was murdered in St Catharines a few weeks later by her estranged husband. Her skull was smashed in by blunt force trauma.

Ontario came too close again to a femicide when Wyann Ruso was attacked by her husband with an axe, despite having contacted the police about the threat to her life. I was asked to speak at a press conference with Ms Ruso. When asked why she was coming forward, she said that she hoped that speaking publicly about her ordeal would be a catalyst for change.

Government does have a paramount role to play in seeing to that change, but change is drastically slow. We

have been reminded by a multitude of groups of what needs to be done on this front. As Rhonda Roffey, executive director of Women's Habitat, who was the keynote speaker at Women's College Hospital, said today, there have been reports, studies, maps, diagrams etc on how to do it. We need to act. We don't need more reports.

Recommendations that sexual harassment be deemed a workplace hazard under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, that affordable housing be built so women do not have to make the choice between staying in a violent relationship and poverty, that the clawback be ended and that daycare be made affordable and available: All of those are things that have been recommended time and time again and need to be put in place.

One of the things we heard today is that because shelters—the emergency housing—are so crowded now, women can't get in because women can't get out. The length of their stay remains longer and longer.

So the core message for today is that consciousness about the real and ever-present threats women face cannot be reserved for occasions that fall during November. The sombre words uttered at these times must be accompanied by a resolve by all of us to put an end to the prejudice that undermines equality and underlies acts of violence. Anything less equals being complicit.

**The Speaker:** Would all members and guests please rise and observe a moment of silence in remembrance of the tragic events at the University of Montreal, in Quebec, on December 6, 1989.

*The House observed a moment's silence.*

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

**Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Finance. I'd like to ask you about what has been described as the largest breach of privacy in Ontario's history: the release to complete strangers of 27,000 names, addresses and social insurance numbers.

Minister, this happened through your ministry under your watch. Why did it happen, and what are you doing about it?

**Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance):** I know the Chair of Management Board will want to comment on that.

1440

**Hon Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I'd just say that to a very large extent it is under Management Board, so I will accept responsibility for it.

Just so the public is aware, there was a change in a program designed to provide cheques to individuals receiving something called the child care supplement. During the implementation of that change what happened

was that the name, address and SIN number of individuals were given on the stub of the cheque of the individual above. In other words, there was a sequence of these things and one individual got the name of the next person and their SIN number and address as a result of, frankly, a computer error and human error.

The minister found out about it first thing Friday morning, took steps immediately to fix it, to ensure that the 27,000 people were notified of the problem, and immediately notified the Information and Privacy Commissioner as well.

**Mr Runciman:** We have the Web site, we have the cheques, and they all say "Ministry of Finance." They don't say "Chair of Management Board."

The Minister of Finance might want to consider a spine transplant and answer some questions that deal with his ministry. We're talking about some basic questions. All the minister gave us here was what has already been made public, and there are basic questions he is either not prepared to answer or is avoiding.

Minister, why didn't you test your new computer system before sending out 27,000 cheques? Were you concerned about costs? Who made the decision not to do a test run? Was your office, the Minister of Finance's office, involved or advised? At least 27,000 people now face the real possibility of having their identities stolen, and they deserve answers. Please start delivering real, meaningful and helpful answers.

**Hon Mr Phillips:** First, I accept full responsibility. It was Management Board that, in the end, ran the program. We've taken, I think, all the steps that were appropriate.

As soon as we found out about it, we made sure the problem was fixed. Twenty-seven thousand letters were in the mail at 7 o'clock this morning, giving people the answers to those very questions that you've outlined. Ministry staff worked the entire weekend to make sure the problem was solved and that the problem was not going beyond this. Twenty-seven thousand letters were prepared and in the mail first thing this morning. At 7 o'clock, in what's called the first sort, those letters were all there.

So when you want to know about what action we took, we took action as quickly as we found out about the problem, we took the appropriate action under the advice of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, and we provided real answers to 27,000 people. Frankly, this problem should never have happened. We will make sure it doesn't happen again, but we have taken every appropriate step possible.

**Mr Runciman:** Somebody is screwing up again. We talked to one of these individuals less than 30 minutes ago. No letters, no phone calls, no contact, no indication of how to destroy this information—the only thing they've received from you or your government is a copy of a press release.

Several years ago, during my term as Solicitor General, I stepped aside for a potential privacy breach. At the time, your leader, Mr McGuinty, citing ministerial accountability, said I'd done the right thing. Given Mr

McGuinty's professed belief in ministerial accountability and the acknowledged fact you've indicated here today that you're responsible for this largest privacy breach in Ontario's history, why have you not stepped down as minister until such time as an investigation into this serious incident is completed?

**Hon Mr Phillips:** Let's put on the record a few facts. It was the previous government that released private, confidential information to something called the provincial office of savings—bank accounts, SIN numbers. Here is the difference: They blocked the Information and Privacy Commissioner's attempt to get at it. We immediately notified the Information and Privacy Commissioner. We took every step possible.

As for the individual you contacted, you probably were not listening to the answer: At 7 o'clock this morning, in the first mail sort, a letter to that person went in the mail. They will get that letter tomorrow or they will get it on Wednesday, and it will provide them with the answers to how they deal with this problem.

So I think we've done the appropriate things, contrary to what the previous government did on the provincial savings office's leak of some very confidential information. They handled it very differently. I think we have handled it appropriately.

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** New question. The leader of the official opposition.

**Mr Runciman:** I'm going to go back to the Minister of Finance, since his fingerprints are all over this.

When the Liberals were in opposition, they were great believers in ministerial accountability and called for the heads of ministers for matters far less serious than this. What we're talking about today is the worst privacy breach in the province's history.

Minister, your ministry's mistake could facilitate many people's identities being stolen, and jeopardize their finances, their credit rating and even their home. This was a massive violation. Can you advise this House and the 27,000 people whose identities risk being stolen if you have placed their SINs on a watch list looking out for fraudulent or possible criminal use? Have you done that?

**Hon Mr Sorbara:** The Chair of Management Board.

**Hon Mr Phillips:** To the member, I again say we have taken the appropriate steps. We have consulted the Information and Privacy Commissioner. We have sent a letter to the 27,000 people. They are aware of the problem, and that is that the next person on the list got their name, their SIN and their address. We have asked them to destroy that information. We have taken those appropriate steps. We know the magnitude of the problem. We know that individuals only have one additional name. We think we've taken, as I've said, the appropriate steps.

**Mr Runciman:** The minister doesn't know the magnitude of this. There's no urgency. No one has even heard from this government. It sounds like you're not prepared as a minister or as a government to take any responsibility for this massive violation of privacy laws. Blame it on some dumb, incompetent bureaucrat. Liberal hands are clean; a human mistake.

We don't accept that, and I'm sure the 27,000 poor souls whose identities now risk being stolen—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. Could I get some order, please. Member from Durham.

**Mr Runciman:** We don't accept this Liberal attempt at a whitewash, and I'm sure the 27,000 poor souls whose identities now risk being stolen don't accept it either. This is an enormously significant breach of privacy, one that deserves more than a behind-closed-door review by the privacy commissioner.

Will you establish a public legislative inquiry to determine what happened, why it happened and who is responsible, and to review the steps taken to protect those whose privacy was violated? Will you do that?

**Hon Mr Phillips:** I will answer. I hope you listen to the answer, because your question indicates you weren't listening to it.

*Interjection.*

**Hon Mr Phillips:** Please be calm. I said—

**Mr Runciman:** I wish you'd listen to the questions.

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon Mr Phillips:** I accept responsibility. I said that. On Friday I accepted responsibility. I indicated to the 27,000 people that we apologize. We began action. The letters went in the mail as quickly as they possibly could. The first sort is at 7 o'clock this morning. The letter was there.

We called in the privacy commissioner. We asked for her advice. She is conducting a report. She is an officer of the Legislature. Surely we have some faith in her to conduct a proper inquiry. I am saying to the Legislature that we now have an officer of this Legislature looking at it. Surely we can await her report. Isn't that the sensible thing to do?

**Mr Runciman:** That is an unbelievable response from a Liberal. Back in 1996, in the wake of Jim Wilson's resignation for a breach of privacy, your leader, Dalton McGuinty, said an FOI commissioner's investigation wouldn't do. It's conducted in secret: no media or public scrutiny; no testimony under oath. That was your leader's position in opposition.

Today we are dealing with the worst breach of privacy in Ontario's history, and you're telling this House and 27,000 people that the Liberals are now singing a different tune. They'll say one thing in opposition and then completely the opposite in government. And you wonder why people are cynical. Why are you wondering? Minister, will you follow the 1996 advice of your leader, Mr McGuinty, and call a legislative inquiry?

**Hon Mr Phillips:** Again, I say to the public, and you should listen to this, Mr Speaker: When they were in office, "... disclosure of highly confidential information given out." Then, what did they do to the Information and Privacy Commissioner? Here's what she says: "The ministry was disrespectful of the mandate of this office. The ministry's efforts to limit our investigation and its failure, in our view, to use its best efforts to ensure that its current and former employees co-operated with us has

hindered this investigation," and the previous government was found in contempt of the Legislature.

**1450**

We're doing it differently. We have asked the Information and Privacy Commissioner to look at this—we notified her immediately. We've taken all the appropriate steps to deal with these 27,000 people. We are doing what I regard, and what I hope the people of Ontario regard, as the appropriate things in this matter.

**The Speaker:** New question.

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is for the finance minister. In February, the McGuinty government promised historic action on North America's fastest-growing crime, identity theft. Do you know what? It's a promise kept. Last week, the McGuinty government delivered the biggest breach of personal privacy and security in Ontario's history. The McGuinty government disclosed the names, addresses and social insurance numbers of 27,000 Ontarians, and you've put those 27,000 people at serious risk of identity theft and fraud.

In February, you promised action of historic proportions. Last week, you failed in historic proportions. Finance Minister, what's next?

**Hon Mr Sorbara:** The Chair of Management Board.

**Hon Mr Phillips:** I think it's very important that the public understand what we're dealing with here: Some 27,000 individuals got the name, social insurance number and address of the next person on the list to receive a cheque. That's what happened. We've notified those 27,000 people. Everybody knows whose name is on the next one. We've asked them to destroy that. We've done what the Information and Privacy Commissioner has advised us to do.

I think we have dealt with this appropriately. It was a mistake that should not have been made. It will be fixed. It is fixed. It's limited, as I say, to one individual knowing the name of the next person on that list and their SIN number. We'll ask the people of Ontario to do what I know they will do: destroy that information.

**Mr Hampton:** This is the leaflet that the McGuinty government released in February, called Keep Your Identity Safe: What You Need to Know to Protect Yourself. We now know that it should have said, What You Need to Know to Protect Yourself from the McGuinty Government.

Apologies and excuses aren't enough, Minister. In the electronic age, identity theft is a very serious threat to those 27,000 people, and the McGuinty government is responsible.

Under the law of Ontario, if a private corporation did this, they would possibly be subject to a \$250,000 fine and compensation of the victims. Will the 27,000 victims of the McGuinty government receive any compensation for the damage you've caused them?

**Hon Mr Phillips:** Again, the damage is the need for them to get rid of that information. I remind all of us—I shouldn't need to spell this out—that we know exactly who got the name of the next person. Frankly, I think that eliminates any possibility of theft or fraud in this case.

So we have taken the steps the Information and Privacy Commissioner has outlined for us. We know exactly the size of the problem, and we know who got the name of the next person. As I say, I have confidence in the people of Ontario to do the appropriate thing and simply say, "I inadvertently got the name of somebody," and it's gone.

**Mr Hampton:** Ten short months ago, this government said, "Security is a top priority for our government, and the integrity of each Ontarian's identity is critical...." So said the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. But by your government's own actions, you've demonstrated that security is a low priority and that the integrity of each Ontarian's identity is trivial to you.

Minister, if you agree that this is a serious matter, will you agree to a full public investigation by the privacy commissioner, with the terms of reference of that investigation determined here in the Legislature and the full report tabled here in the Legislature within six months?

**Hon Mr Phillips:** Again, I say to the public, I take it extremely seriously. I found out about it Friday morning. We took all of the steps to correct the problem. We began the action to make sure that we communicated to the 27,000 people. We have launched an internal audit as well.

I would just say to all of us, once again, we have the Information and Privacy Commissioner, an officer of this Legislature, a highly regarded individual, who I have every confidence in to do the appropriate investigation. Now, in another case, her report led to the government of the day being held in contempt of the Legislature because they didn't co-operate. I assure you and the public that we'll co-operate and are co-operating absolutely fully with the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

#### WOMEN'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL

**Mr Howard Hampton (Kenora-Rainy River):** My question is to the Minister of Health. For months we have warned you that your failure to properly fund Ontario's hospitals is hurting patient care in communities across this province. Now we learn of another most disappointing incident: 10 of the most fragile babies in Ontario became seriously ill last week after catching a virus in the overcrowded neonatal unit at Women's College Hospital in Toronto.

In 2003, the Conservative government committed funding to address the problem of overcrowding and inadequate space in the neonatal unit, but when you became government, you stopped the project and put these infants at risk of what happened last week. Minister, why did you stall this project when you knew that doing so would put frail infants at risk?

**Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'd like to thank the honourable member for the question and say to those women and men who are working today, as they have for some time, at the perinatal and gynecology program at the Women's College site of Sunnybrook and Women's, that we appre-

ciate their efforts on behalf of the patients—the youngest and their moms—in the province of Ontario.

I would like to correct the statement that the honourable member made. The previous government certainly did not provide funding; they provided a press release. The challenge that we confront as a government is that all across the breadth of the province of Ontario in the run-up to the last election, the previous government ran around and presented plastic cheques—rubber cheques, actually.

The fact of the matter is that the receiving institution, Sunnybrook, which has an expectation of an extraordinarily large capital plan, does not have the fiscal wherewithal to raise their local share of the project. We are, on an expedited basis, asking one of the highest-quality public health administrators that we have in our province, Dr Jack Kitts, the CEO of the Ottawa Hospital, to review the decision point that was taken to make sure that we're moving forward in a fashion which is in the best interests of the patients of the province of Ontario and also within the fiscal capacity of those institutions—

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Thank you. Supplementary.

**Mr Hampton:** After 10 frail babies' health is put at risk, then you appoint someone to do damage control. You've known about this for 14 months: Women's College neonatal unit is overcrowded. The Ministry of Health officials say that there should be 100 square feet for each baby's bed and the accompanying equipment. At Women's College Hospital there are just 30 square feet of space in the neonatal unit per infant.

As I say, you've known about this for 14 months. You could have moved ahead to fix this. When will you approve this project, so that we can provide these frail, vulnerable babies with the health care they need and deserve?

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** I think the honourable member should acknowledge that these babies are being provided an excellent quality of care. There are challenges there, of course, with respect to space. I've had the opportunity to personally tour that facility. I think we should also give appropriate credit to the work that's being done there by the front-line health care workers in the province of Ontario.

There are challenges with respect to infection, which is a reality in all institutional environments, and we seek to try and deal with that.

There is no connection, which the honourable member makes, between that incident and the announcement of Dr Kitts's appointment. This is something that has been in the works for quite some time and in discussion with officials from Women's College Hospital and others.

1500

It's important that we get on with it; I agree. But unlike the honourable member, I will not be a Minister of Health who advances a policy idea or a political decision that cannot be supported from a financial standpoint by the receiving institution. That's in part a measure of the challenge we're facing, and we are seeking to make sure

we can move forward in a fashion that allows the organization that is to provide the services to do so in a fashion that's consistent with their financial capabilities. We will make that decision on an expedited basis, with a view toward enhancing the quality of care for these young patients.

**Mr Hampton:** You know, Minister, I remember when you were over here 15 short months ago, and if someone had given that answer, you'd have gone through the roof. This is what you've known for the past 14 months: Women's College Hospital cares for 280 premature babies a year. Each of them weighs less than three pounds. Many are born very premature and are hospitalized for 100 days or more. We have a duty to provide the best possible health care for these fragile babies, and you are failing them.

Women's College neonatal unit is overcrowded. It needs larger quarters so that it is not conducive to the spread of viruses and infections among these frail babies, exactly what happened under your watch. Minister, will you provide the funds now for the new space that is so badly and obviously needed?

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** I think the honourable member unwittingly puts himself in the position where he supports a process that will see a 33-month construction schedule be placed as a barrier to progress on the very same point that he champions today. I support the most timely resolution possible to this issue, but it is not necessarily to be found, sir, in a 33-month construction cycle.

What we are doing on an expedited basis is to find the circumstance that will as quickly and efficiently as possible deliver on the challenge we confront, which has been identified. I agree with the honourable member that it's important to move forward promptly and that's why, as a matter of faith, unlike the honourable member, I don't accept the idea that the only resolution possible is to leave these children there for 33 months while we build an additional wing at a hospital.

I think there are other alternatives that I want to have examined, so I've reached out to one of the most accomplished public health administrators, Dr Jack Kitts, to give us his advice. I think this will happen on an expedited basis, and we'll be able to make a decision that is in the best interests of those young patients.

#### DISCLOSURE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

**Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leader of the Opposition):** I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Business Services dealing with the worst privacy breach in the province's history, and given that we're not getting any helpful responses from the Chair of Management Board. Minister, earlier I asked the Chair of Management Board about the 27,000 people, 27,000 potential victims, whose identities risk being stolen, whether your government has placed their SIN numbers on a watch list, looking out for fraudulent or possible criminal use. We

know that a SIN can be used as a possibility in obtaining a birth certificate, a driver's licence, a range of identity documents, foundation documents. Can you inform the House and those 20,000 concerned people of Ontario just what your government is doing to respond to this concern?

**Hon Jim Watson (Minister of Consumer and Business Services):** I'd refer it to the Chair of Management Board.

**Hon Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** Again, just for the public review, as soon as we found out about this—my office found out early Friday morning—the Information and Privacy Commissioner was advised and we sought her input. A letter went out to 27,000 people, with her input, advising them what to do. We are taking all of the appropriate steps based on the best advice we can get, including the advice from the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Some 27,000 people will be getting a letter tomorrow or on Wednesday outlining the steps they're to take to destroy the information, to advise us if there are any particular problems that they see in the days ahead.

**Mr Runciman:** It's obvious the Liberal government is circling the wagons. They're more intent on protecting their political hides than these potential 27,000 victims. That's the reality.

I'm going to go back to the minister and ask him a question I asked him earlier, which he avoided responding to, and that's with respect to a quote attributed to his now leader back in 1996, when he took a look at the role of the Privacy Commissioner in relation to what could be looked at in terms of a mandate of a legislative committee taking a look at this issue, the worst breach of privacy in the province's history. Minister, I remind you of that. Why are you refusing? Why do you believe it's inappropriate to establish a legislative committee to have a full mandate to take a look at all of the implications of this, not just for what happened in the past, but what may happen in the future? Why will you not do that?

**Hon Mr Phillips:** Again, what would the public expect from us? Friday morning, as soon as we found out, we notified the Information and Privacy Commissioner, notified every MPP's office. The Information and Privacy Commissioner is the appropriate person to look at this. An officer of the Legislature, she reports to the Legislature. She is looking at it. She's independent; she's someone the public has confidence in. I think that is the appropriate person and body to look at that, and that's what she's doing.

Apart from that, as I say, I think we've taken all the appropriate steps. As soon as we found out about it, we prepared the answer for the 27,000 people; the Information and Privacy Commissioner was notified; all the MPPs here were notified. I instructed our staff to immediately determine whether there was any other problem in any other ministry dealing with this. They began working on that. We spent the weekend fixing the problem. I think the public understands. It was a mistake; it shouldn't have happened. We've taken the steps that I think the public would have expected of their government.

## TUITION

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, before you and the others were elected, all of you adamantly condemned high tuition fees. You said, and I quote to you from your platform, "The Harris-Eves government raised tuition a staggering 45% for basic undergraduate programs and allowed tuition to skyrocket in programs such as medicine, law and engineering. We will not let this continue." When they elected you, students believed you would not increase tuitions, but your post-secondary review panel has already asserted that students will have to pay more to solve the province's post-secondary funding problem. We didn't think you would be so Machiavellian as to promise a freeze, get elected, and then hike fees immediately after the two-year period is over. Minister, is that what you're planning?

**Hon Mary Anne V. Chambers (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities):** Unfortunately, the member from Trinity-Spadina is now speculating, and it's very unfortunate because it is our government that froze tuition fees. It's our government that announced improvements in Ontario student assistance for all students, including opening up eligibility to protected persons and immigrants who have been here for less than 12 months, and improving opportunities for support for students who are not able to get as much support from their parents as previous governments thought they should.

So I'm really surprised that the member from Trinity-Spadina is playing this little game. I have no idea where he's coming from, because the Rae report is not available until January and his recommendations have not yet been tabled.

**Mr Marchese:** I'm surprised that you are surprised, because I attended a conference a mere couple of months ago where you yourself said that tuition fees were likely to go up, but that a review of the loan system was necessary.

It's no secret to anyone that you and your panel are considering income-contingent repayment schemes. These loan schemes have failed everywhere that they have been tried. Where they have been implemented, they put an unfair burden on lower- and middle-income families, on women and people of colour, and you know that. In Ontario, the Canadian Federation of Students and the faculty association have condemned it, and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance rejected it. Just today, the Ontario Coalition for Post-Secondary Education says that under this loan scheme, we will see lower-income students pay more for their education than students from high-income families. I can't believe that you are thinking of charging working families more for the same education.

Faced with these findings, and the findings that have failed—the experience of loan schemes in other countries—will you say no to these regressive and irresponsible income-contingent loan repayment schemes?

1510

**Hon Mrs Chambers:** I do appreciate the newfound interest that the member of the third party is pretending to demonstrate here. Do you know what? The situation that we inherited is what we are working to correct. It is our government that is committed to accessibility, affordability and high-quality education. It is our government that plans to reverse the situation created by the last two governments, Tory and NDP. It was those governments that created a situation where Ontario's universities and colleges are funded at the lowest level of all colleges and universities in Canada. It was those two governments that created a situation where tuition fees rose by more than 130% over the past decade. And it was those two governments that created a decline in student assistance. We will fix that.

## GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** My question is for the Chair of Management Board. Just a short time ago today, we voted in favour of third reading of Bill 25, An Act respecting government advertising. For a few years, I sat on the other side of this House and watched the previous government waste hard-earned taxpayers' dollars on partisan government advertising such as the Magna budget, which was perhaps the previous government's biggest advertising ploy but, thank God, a failed one.

I can remember being on campaign trails and people talking about these glossy booklets that showed up in their houses, and all through the year, not just during campaigns. They talked about how much of a waste it was of taxpayers' dollars for them to look at all these government faces taking credit for things they shouldn't have, in a partisan way.

I need to know, for us in my riding, how will Bill 25 be different than yesterday's practices? How can the government have that commitment not to use taxpayers' money on partisan advertising? Can you tell us what changes are happening with Bill 25?

**Hon Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** I'm quite proud of the piece of legislation passed today. There's nothing like it in North America, and perhaps the world. It bans partisan advertising.

The public should be aware of the most important thing: The Auditor General must approve all advertising. The Auditor General is an officer of this Legislature. We've laid out in the bill, as you know, the criteria: It can't be partisan; it must include the cost paid for by the taxpayers; it can't have a picture of the cabinet or the Premier in it; and it lays out the criteria for approving it. I think the public should be comforted that an independent officer of the Legislature, the Auditor General, must approve it. As my colleague said, it will save tens of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money that can be better spent on health care, education and the environment.

**Mr Levac:** Speaker, he stole a little bit of my thunder, because that's exactly what we're talking about: making sure that the money gets spent in the right direction. I'm



proud to be part of a government that said they were not going to be wasting valuable taxpayers' dollars on partisan government advertising. It will ensure that taxpayers are being served with the right information at the right time about the programs that the Legislature and the government are doing for the citizens of Ontario. We want to focus those monies on hospitals, on schools, as we've been saying since the very beginning.

But I want to know one thing that's important for the people to understand so that we know that we can get working on this, and that's when the legislation is to be effective and start working. How soon can we expect not to see any more partisan advertising in the province of Ontario?

**Hon Mr Phillips:** Since the bill was introduced, we have been living up to the spirit and intent of it. The Auditor General has asked that we not proclaim certain sections of the bill for a few months while he ensures that he has in place the necessary staff to approve it. As my colleague said, it makes sense. That was the request of the Auditor General, that we not proclaim certain sections.

We're already living up to the spirit of the act. The Auditor General should, in the next few months, have the necessary staff in place so all of the advertising can be referred to his office for his approval before it ever runs here in Ontario.

#### HYDRO GENERATION

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is to the Minister of Energy. You know that you and your Premier both promised during the election to cease the operation of the five coal plants before the end of 2007. You know you made these ridiculous promises while failing to listen to the Electricity Conservation and Supply Task Force, which unanimously recommended that you postpone this reckless promise.

**Hon James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism and Recreation):** Oh, so you're opposed to closing them.

**Mr O'Toole:** No. Just last week, it's clear you broke your promise. Now you've decided that you'll keep some of the coal plants operating, idling just in case. The real question now is, what plants and at what price? That's clearly the question.

You were quoted in the Windsor Star, your hometown paper, as saying you might need to keep coal reserves running, and God forbid a catastrophe at Beck or at Niagara Falls.

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Question.

**Mr O'Toole:** Furthermore, I would say that this is a really classic moment in Ontario where the Liberals are flip-flopping in public. They've failed, and these are clearly irresponsible and reckless election promises. Stand and tell the people of Ontario what your plans are.

**Hon Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy, Government House Leader):** We remain committed to replacing coal-fired generation in Ontario as per our commitment in the last election. We think it is in the best interests of all the people of this province that we reduce

nitrous oxide emissions, sulphur dioxide emissions, mercury and, most important, greenhouse gas emissions.

There are those who say you can't do it. There are those, like Howard Hampton and the NDP, who will say, "Keep Lakeview generating station open. Keep polluting Toronto. Keep polluting Ontario." There are those, like the member who posed the question, who are satisfied that smog days in Algonquin Park are acceptable to the people of Ontario.

We don't think that's acceptable. We made a commitment to reduce and replace coal-fired generation in this province. We are moving as quickly and with as much dispatch and prudence as we can to ensure that we achieve the goal in the timeline we outlined. I invite the member opposite: Let's work together to eliminate smog days in Algonquin Park.

**Mr O'Toole:** I think the people of Ontario should get ready to find a lump of coal in their Christmas stocking. In fact, if you look at it, you know you're running out of time. That's the issue here. It was an unrealistic, unfulfillable commitment by the Liberals during an election. You know that. The task force knows that. The only people you haven't been straightforward with are the people of Ontario.

You know that the timeline for a new gas plant or a nuclear plant is going to preclude the fact that you're going to need coal-fired generation. You also know that coal traditionally has been used as a peaking power source. During this winter, the people of Ontario are going to have shortage of supply and higher prices.

You are the author of this misfortune. All I'm asking you to do today is to tell the people of Ontario—the jobs, the economy, the threat that's hanging over their heads—that you have no plan except to tell them what they want to hear because of some poll you've done.

**Hon Mr Duncan:** Here's what the member said in committee on September 15, and just so you'll understand the context of the question—this is from Hansard—he said, "You've got a balance here of stable, reliable supply and its relationship with quality of life." Then he rhetorically asked, "Which comes first?" Do you know what his answer was? Stable prices.

We think quality of life comes first. We think it's important to clean up the environment. We think that there's a long-term cost associated with near-epidemic proportions of childhood asthma. We think it's wrong that a government turns its back on 1,800 premature deaths a year. We think, and disagree with you. We don't agree. We will not put dollars and cents ahead of quality of life. We will put quality of life ahead of everything else. We'll do it fiscally responsibly and ensure a better quality of life, and a better price for electricity, than you could ever have imagined in your eight lost years in office.

1520

#### GREENBELT

**Ms Marilyn Churley (Toronto-Danforth):** A question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs: Members from

the Ontario Greenbelt Alliance and municipal leaders for the greenbelt have pointed out that 70,000 hectares of forest, wetlands and prime agricultural land need greenbelt protection. These include woodlands, ravines and other areas designated as environmentally significant. There is absolutely no planning case why these significant environmental and agricultural lands are excluded from the greenbelt. These lands will be lost forever if they're not included now. I'm asking you, will you do that today?

**Hon John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors):** I'm very pleased to answer this question and anything relating to the greenbelt. The greenbelt is good for you and me and for Ontario's future for generations to come. We are very proud of the fact that we're going to add one million acres of environmentally sensitive and agricultural lands to the greenbelt.

We made a commitment to the people of Ontario when we ran in the election a year and a bit ago, in which we said, "We are going to protect a greenbelt around the city of Toronto," and that's exactly what we're doing. We've had consultations through the Greenbelt Task Force—we've had consultations in eight different settings just over the last couple of months—and we think we're doing the right thing.

It may very well be that at some point in time in the future, more land will be added to the greenbelt, once the Places to Grow study has been completed. But right now, we think the one million acres of land we are adding to the existing Oak Ridges moraine and the Niagara Escarpment is good for the environment, good for future generations and good for Ontario.

**Ms Churley:** I don't think you understand what they're trying to tell you and what I'm trying to tell you: If you don't include these lands now, they will be gobbled up, developed and lost forever, and your stated goal of stopping urban sprawl under your Greenbelt Act will not be accomplished; it's that simple. By not including those 70,000 hectares of significant environmental and agricultural land in the greenbelt, urban sprawl will continue to encroach upon these natural heritage features and prime farming land.

Minister, I am telling you again, you can stand up and brag about this all you want, but you will not achieve your goal. We are running out of time. Will you do the right thing and move today to designate the land lying between the existing urban boundaries and the proposed greenbelt areas as protected countryside in your final greenbelt plan?

**Hon Mr Gerretsen:** First of all, let me say that I know that I speak on behalf of the government when we say we appreciate the assistance that member and that party have given, because I know they're all in favour of the greenbelt as well. But let me also say that there is a significant amount of urban land that is outside the greenbelt right now—below the greenbelt—that is still ready for development. We want to take a serious look at the other 150,000 acres of land that lie between the urban

area and the greenbelt. We want to take a look at it in light of the greenbelt we are proposing and in light of the Places to Grow document that's still to come. At some point in time in the future, we will be looking at the 70,000 acres of land she's talking about to see whether that should or should not be included within the greenbelt.

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**Mr Tony C. Wong (Markham):** My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Many families in my community were pleased to hear that our government is increasing funding for programs like Healthy Babies, Healthy Children and infant hearing screening. When you announced Best Start, you made a compelling case for the importance of investing in the healthy development of our children right from the beginning. Will you inform the House about these increased investments and what they will mean for the children and families of Ontario?

**Hon Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Children and Youth Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration):** I was very pleased to be in Ottawa on Friday to announce the allocations. We are providing an increase of \$2.6 million for this fiscal year for Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, and this will grow to \$8.3 million in 2005-06. This is part of our Best Start plan and is based on the fact that early identification and support is the best way to help keep our children healthy and ensure they have the language skills they need to succeed in school.

This is what Dr Robert Cushman—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Order. May I ask the member from Burlington to just come to order, please. Could you complete your response, Minister.

**Hon Mrs Bountrogianni:** This is what Dr Robert Cushman from Ottawa public health has to say: "The money will allow us to allocate more resources to the families most at risk. We're finding that we visit two thirds of the families, but a certain number of families need long-term follow-up, and this money will allow us to follow those families and to make the resources we have available to them."

**Mr Wong:** Thank you, Minister. This is exciting news. I know that parents in my community are eager to take advantage of these services. However, I am concerned that not all families in my region will be able to access them. As you know, York region has one of the fastest-growing populations in the province. Over the past number of years, services in York region have not grown to match the growing number of families that need them. Minister, what are you doing to ensure that all children in my community will have access to important programs like Healthy Babies, Healthy Children?

**Hon Mrs Bountrogianni:** The honourable member is quite right. There are growing populations in places like York and Peel, and we took that into consideration for

the allocation of these monies. That is why regions like York will be receiving a larger piece of the pie than in previous years. This community will receive an increase of \$1,020,616, and Peel will receive an increase of \$836,954, because these are growing communities and we want all children across the province to be part of our Best Start plan.

The greatest predictor for success in school is speech and language. The earlier we can screen for those difficulties and remediate them, the better the kids will do in school.

#### HIGHWAY 17

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, in the last election campaign, your party promised “to comprehensively improve northern highways and four-lane vital links to major communities in the northeast and northwest.”

In just one week in October, Highway 17 east of Nipigon washed out four times. As part of the Trans-Canada Highway, Highway 17 is certainly a vital transportation link. However, your announcement of the strategic highway infrastructure program and your reannouncement of the northern prosperity plan last week made no mention of improvements to Highway 17 east of Nipigon. Minister, will you commit to make the improvements that are needed to this section of Highway 17 east of Nipigon?

**Hon Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** I would like to thank the member from Muskoka for the question. Clearly, there is no question about our commitment to northern highways, and that’s why we are ensuring that there is a northern highway strategy, as we committed to in the election. We will live up to our commitment about putting together a northern highway strategy, because we understand that northern highways are economic lifelines to northern Ontario.

We committed unprecedented millions of dollars in the last budget to ensure that we address the concern that the member outlined and the concerns of northerners when it comes to our highways. Certainly, for too long they were ignored by previous governments and we want to ensure that we address those through a northern highway strategy.

**Mr Miller:** Minister, when you were in opposition, you were demanding work on Highway 69 just about every day. I happened to drive up to Sudbury last week and I didn’t see any construction. I don’t know what’s going on there.

Highway 17 is also a vital link from Nipigon to Thunder Bay. When I visited the area last year, I met with local business people and representatives of the Thunder Bay Regional Cancer Centre. Both told me that four-laning Highway 17 was their number one priority. That’s the section where Highway 17 and Highway 11 become one highway, and it’s frequently closed in the wintertime.

Minister, this is about safety, the economy, and people’s access to timely health care. Will you take action to four-lane Highway 17 from Nipigon to Thunder Bay and then on to Shabaqua Corners?

**Hon Mr Bartolucci:** For the precise reason outlined in the member’s question, we are putting together a northern Ontario highway strategy. He talks about the inaction on Highway 69. The only government to do nothing on Highway 69 south of Sudbury was the previous government.

After one month in office, we signed the strategic highway infrastructure agreement with the federal government. That’s going to influence the amount of time it takes to improve those highways: Highway 11, Highway 17, Highway 69. We are committed to ensuring that the economic lifelines, our highways, are addressed not only in a timely way but in a way that is caring and will promote the economic growth and public safety that this government wants when it comes to northern highways.

1530

#### MIDWIFERY

**Ms Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** My question is for the Minister of Health. Ontario midwives provide vital primary care to moms and their babies during pregnancy and the first six weeks after birth. This model of care provides the kind of results in maternity care that Ontario is looking for: reduced hospital stays, fewer interventions and far fewer hospital readmissions, with excellent health outcomes for women and babies.

In a Ministry of Health survey done last year, women and families receiving midwifery care had a client satisfaction rate of 98.7%, and yet Ontario’s 300 registered midwives have not had a wage increase since their profession was regulated by our government in 1994. Minister, midwifery represents a cost-effective way to provide maternity care. When will your government properly compensate Ontario’s midwives?

**Hon George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I’m very pleased to respond to the question from the honourable member and agree very much that midwifery is a very important model of practice. That’s why this year our government funded an additional 55 spots, 45 of which have been filled.

I agree with the honourable member that there is an issue about appropriate compensation, and that’s why I went very directly to the conference of midwives last year at Kempenfelt Bay and told them very expressly that my first priority was to find funding for the additional 55 spots, which I accomplished, and acknowledged that I would continue to work to try to begin to address the compensation challenges.

I’d be clear in saying to the honourable member, as I have to midwives themselves, that their expectation of having an immediate catch-up for the period of time that the previous government and the latter year of your party’s government didn’t increase their funding was not reasonable. Having said that, I continue to be of the

opinion that we need to do more to hire more midwives in Ontario and to look at compensation issues, and that's exactly what we're in the midst of doing.

**Ms Martel:** Minister, you would know, because midwives are telling you, that the number of new registrants just equals the number of midwives who are leaving the profession. There has been no net gain of midwives in the province. That is because, in order to be (a) attracted and (b) retained in the province, these women need to get adequate compensation for the excellent care they're providing to women and children. The lack of any compensation increase in the last 10 years means that many midwives are now unable to provide the kind of high-quality maternity care that Ontario women are entitled to.

Ontario midwives submitted a proposal to your ministry in February 2004 regarding compensation. At their conference in May, you publicly stated you would review their compensation. Since then, numerous meetings between the ministry and midwives to discuss this issue have been cancelled by your ministry. It's now December. No decision has been made with respect to compensation for midwives. Minister, when is your government going to sit down and negotiate fair compensation for Ontario midwives?

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** I wish I had three minutes to answer all the misinformation in the honourable member's question. Let me say, firstly, that I went very directly to their conference and said that, while I recognized that compensation was their number one issue, it was not mine, and that mine was finding additional resources to hire additional midwives.

The honourable member suggests that we're just netting out the same number of midwives. That's obviously untrue. In 1995-96, the province of Ontario spent \$6 million on midwives. In 2004-05, we're spending \$37 million on midwives. We have gains of midwives and additional services being provided that way.

Having said all that, ministry officials are in very regular contact with midwives, as are political staff in my ministry. And while I regret—

*Interjections.*

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** See, Mr Speaker, the misinformation that one must—

**The Speaker (Hon Alvin Curling):** Order. I see that both are not interested in either hearing the question or in the minister's trying to answer the question. Could you wrap it up in about 10 seconds?

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** All I would say is that I do regret that a planned meeting with me the week before last was cancelled because I had a little stomach ailment, but we're going to have that meeting. We're going to work with midwives.

*Interjection.*

**Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** You were trying frozen sushi.

**Hon Mr Smitherman:** It might have been that.

I want to repeat one thing. We are, as relates to health care, in an era of restraint, and the expectation to see all

of this lost time made up in one fell swoop is not practical, given our current fiscal realities.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I have a question for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. My constituents in Algoma-Manitoulin have been anticipating the details of the government's northern prosperity plan. They've been looking forward particularly to the details about the new program areas for the refocused northern Ontario heritage fund.

Since its inception in 1988, the northern Ontario heritage fund has been an important resource for our communities. Can you please tell my constituents about the new program areas for the northern Ontario heritage fund and how they will benefit my constituents in Algoma-Manitoulin?

**Hon Rick Bartolucci (Minister of Northern Development and Mines):** Before I start, I just want to begin by thanking my cabinet colleagues, who have all been to the north. In fact, several of them have been to the north several times: our Premier, seven times; Minister Bountrogianni, five times; Minister Pupatello, four times. Our ministers are visiting the north multiple times, and they understand it.

That's why I am pleased to say that our government is keeping our commitment to refocus the mandate of the northern Ontario heritage fund, which is a key component of our northern prosperity plan. A refocused northern Ontario heritage fund will help northern communities attract and retain investments and jobs that they need to grow.

This new mandate will focus on job creation, private sector involvement and investment, and continued investment in vital infrastructure across the north. There are going to be six new programs, which I'd like to outline in the supplementary.

**Mr Brown:** As the House will know, the north did not participate in the buoyant economy of southern Ontario during the late 1990s and the early part of this century. We have a lot to make up for.

In my particular constituency, the government announced some months ago and is actively pursuing a \$3.5-million investment from the northern Ontario heritage fund to expand cellular service in the Highway 101 corridor between Chapleau and Wawa, and on Highway 17 between Sault Ste Marie and White River. Obviously, that is a very important initiative for my constituents.

Access to cellular service and broadband Internet services are essential for northerners and northern business. Can you tell my constituents when you'll have more details about the emerging technologies and telecommunications programs and when proponents may apply?

**Hon Mr Bartolucci:** These six new programs are vitally important to the north. They're called the enterprise north job creation program, the northern Ontario young entrepreneur program, the northern Ontario youth internships and co-op program, and we will continue the infrastructure and community development program. We

will provide assistance supporting emerging technology projects in northern Ontario and we will introduce a new small business energy conservation program.

The member is correct. It is vitally important for his community and the businesses in his community to be able to access the information necessary to apply. So we will provide an unbelievable marketing program in order to ensure that everyone has the information and can start applying in the new year.

## PETITIONS

### VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

**Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** I am pleased to present petitions from firefighters and their supporters in the Grimsby area, which read as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas many volunteer fire departments in Ontario are strengthened by the service of double-hatter firefighters who work as professional, full-time firefighters and also serve as volunteer firefighters on their own free time; and

“Whereas double-hatter firefighters are being forced to resign as volunteer firefighters or face losing their full-time jobs, which is weakening volunteer fire departments in Ontario;

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

“The Dalton McGuinty Liberals should support double-hatters, and protect the right of firefighters to volunteer in their home communities on their own free time.”

Behind S. Lawson and C. Kirkland, I affix my signature in support.

1540

### ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** This is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is no established province-wide standard to deal with anaphylactic shock in Ontario schools; and

“Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylactic shock in the Education Act; and

“Whereas anaphylactic shock is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

“Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

“Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all schools in Ontario;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the McGuinty government support the passing of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students, which requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan.”

I sign my name to this petition and hand it over to Adam.

### CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I'm pleased to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly; in fact, it responds to Bill 154, my private member's bill. It says,

“Re: support for chiropractic services in Ontario health insurance plan:

“Whereas,

“Elimination of OHIP coverage will mean that many of the 1.2 million patients who use chiropractic will no longer be able to access the health care they need;

“Those with reduced ability to pay—including seniors, low-income families and the working poor—will be forced to seek care in already overburdened family physician offices and emergency departments;

“Elimination of OHIP coverage is expected to save \$93 million in expenditures on chiropractic treatment at a cost to government of over \$200 million in other health care costs; and

“There was no consultation with the public on the decision to delist chiropractic services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the decision announced in the May 18, 2004, provincial budget and maintain OHIP coverage for chiropractic services, in the best interests of the public, patients, the health care system, government and the province.”

I'm pleased to sign this on behalf of my constituents of the riding of Durham.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mrs Maria Van Bommel (Lambton-Kent-Middlesex):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the funding formula used by the Ministry of Health provided only a 1% increase for Four Counties Health Services in Newbury; and

“Whereas Four Counties Health Services has a projected deficit of \$1.7 million; and

“Whereas the plan to balance the budget of Four Counties Health Services by 2006 recommends the closing of all beds at the hospital; and....

“Whereas the continuing viability and operation is of critical importance to the quality of life of all citizens in the hospital's catchment area;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, request a review of the budget/funding and consultation with the hospital board/administration/community to reflect the needs of our rural hospital and community.”

I have already signed this one.

### PIT BULLS

**Mr Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** I have a petition that's titled “Ban the deed, not the breed.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among any breed or crossbreed; and

“Whereas breed ban legislation is not an effective solution to dog attacks; and

“Whereas the problem of dog attacks is best dealt with through a comprehensive program of education, training and legislation encouraging responsible ownership of all breeds;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to refrain from passing breed-specific legislation, and instead implement a comprehensive bite prevention strategy that encourages responsible ownership of all breeds.”

This is signed by Danielle Kershaw, Bobbi Ann Dwornikiewicz, Rob Willett, Chris Kershaw and others.

#### CHIROPRACTIC SERVICES

**Ms Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Re: support for chiropractic services in Ontario health insurance plan:

“Whereas,

“Elimination of OHIP coverage will mean that many of the 1.2 million patients who use chiropractic will no longer be able to access the health care they need;

“Those with reduced ability to pay—including seniors, low-income families and the working poor—will be forced to seek care in already overburdened family physician offices and emergency departments;

“Elimination of OHIP coverage is expected to save \$93 million in expenditures on chiropractic treatment at a cost to government of over \$200 million in other health care costs; and

“There was no consultation with the public on the decision to delist chiropractic services;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse the decision announced in the May 18, 2004, provincial budget and maintain OHIP coverage for chiropractic services, in the best interests of the public, patients, the health care system, government and the province.”

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

#### HOSPITAL FUNDING

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

“Whereas the funding formula used by the Ministry of Health provided only a 1% increase for Four Counties Health Services in Newbury; and

“Whereas Four Counties Health Services has a projected deficit of \$1.7 million; and

“Whereas the plan to balance the budget of Four Counties Health Services by 2006 recommends the closing of all beds at the hospital; and....

“Whereas the continuing viability and operation is of critical importance to the quality of life of all citizens in the hospital’s catchment area;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, request a review of the budget/funding and consultation with the hospital

board/administration/community to reflect the needs of our rural hospital and community.”

This petition is signed by a number of residents from Wardsville, Rodney and Muirkirk.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** This is a “Save Our Regional Centres for People with Developmental Disabilities” petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal government were elected based on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario; and

“Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Ontario’s three remaining regional centres for people with developmental disabilities, located in Smiths Falls, Orillia and Blenheim, Ontario;

“Whereas the regional centres are home to more than 1,000 disabled adults, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

“Whereas closing the regional centres will have a devastating impact on people with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and economies of the local communities; and

“Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the regional centres to extend specialized services, support and professional training to thousands more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Ontario’s regional centres for people with developmental disabilities open, and to transform them into centres of excellence to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they live.”

I’m pleased to sign that.

#### CHILDREN’S HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are approximately 23,000 children and youth in Simcoe county and York region who have special needs; and

“Whereas approximately 6,000 of these children have multiple special needs that require a range of core rehabilitation services; and

“Whereas children with multiple special needs (and their families) throughout the province access ongoing rehabilitation services that are critical for their development at children’s treatment centres in their area; and

“Whereas there is no children’s treatment centre in Simcoe county or York region. For families that can travel, the closest services are in Toronto; and

“Whereas Simcoe county and York region is the only area left in the entire province that does not have access to children’s treatment centre services in their own area; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care provided funding to the Simcoe York District Health Council for implementation planning for an integrated children’s rehabilitation services system in December 2001, and

“Whereas the implementation plan was submitted to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care in December 2002; and

“Whereas the proposal was reviewed and approved by the appropriate ministries in 2003, and in August the Ministry of Health advised the Simcoe county and York Region District Health Council that the funding had been committed and would be available shortly;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to release the funding for the children’s treatment centre in Simcoe county and York region so that core rehabilitation services can be delivered to the children and youth in Simcoe county and York region.”

I’m pleased to sign my name to that.

#### PIT BULLS

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among any breed or crossbreed; and

“Breed-specific legislation and breed bans are not effective solutions to the problem of dog attacks; and

“The problem of dog attacks is best dealt with through a comprehensive program of education, training and legislation encouraging responsible ownership of all breeds;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to refrain from enacting provincial animal control legislation that is breed-specific, and instead implement a comprehensive bite prevention strategy that encourages responsible ownership of all breeds.”

As I am in favour of this, I will affix my signature.

1550

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal government were elected on their promise to rebuild public services in Ontario;

“Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Ontario’s three remaining regional centres for people with developmental disabilities, located in Smiths Falls, Orillia and Blenheim, Ontario;

“Whereas the regional centres are home to more than 1,000 disabled adults, many of whom have multiple

diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

“Whereas closing the regional centres will have a devastating impact on people with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and economies of the local communities; and

“Whereas Ontario could use the professional staff and facilities of the regional centres to extend specialized services, support and professional training to thousands more clients who live in the community, in partnership with families and community agencies;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the government to keep Ontario’s regional centres for people with developmental disabilities open, and to transform them into centres of excellence to provide specialized services and support to Ontarians with developmental needs, no matter where they might live.”

I’m pleased to sign my name to that.

#### OPTOMETRISTS

**Mrs Julia Munro (York North):** To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the last funding agreement between the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ontario Association of Optometrists (OAO) expired March 31, 2000; and

“Whereas the optometric fees for OHIP-insured services remain unchanged since 1989; and

“Whereas the lack of any fee increase for 15 years has created a crisis situation for optometrists; and

“Whereas fees for OHIP services do not provide for fair or reasonable compensation for the professional services of optometrists, in that they no longer cover the costs of providing eye examinations; and

“Whereas it is in the best interests of patients and the government to have a new funding agreement for insured services that will ensure that the most vulnerable members of our society are able to receive the eye care that they need;

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

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care resume negotiations immediately with the OAO and appoint a mediator to help with the negotiation process in order to ensure that optometrists can continue to provide quality eye care services to patients in Ontario.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

#### ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

**Mr Dave Levac (Brant):** This is written to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is no established province-wide standard to deal with anaphylactic shock in Ontario schools; and

“Whereas there is no specific comment regarding anaphylactic shock in the Education Act; and

“Whereas anaphylactic shock is a serious concern that can result in life-or-death situations; and

“Whereas all students in Ontario have the right to be safe and feel safe in their school community; and

“Whereas all parents of anaphylactic students need to know that safety standards exist in all schools in Ontario;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, demand that the McGuinty government support the passing of Bill 3, An Act to protect anaphylactic students”—my bill—“which requires that every school principal in Ontario establish a school anaphylactic plan.”

I want to thank NASK, the Canadian association for anaphylaxis and Cindy Paskey for this particular petition. I hand this over to Emma.

#### LANDFILL

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I will definitely be supporting Mr Levac’s bill if it goes forward.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the county of Simcoe proposes to construct a landfill at site 41 in the township of Tiny; and

“Whereas the county of Simcoe has received, over a period of time, the necessary approvals from the Ministry of the Environment to design and construct a landfill at site 41; and

“Whereas, as part of the landfill planning process, peer reviews of site 41 identified over 200 recommendations for improvements to the design, most of which are related to potential groundwater contamination; and

“Whereas the Minister of the Environment has on numerous occasions stated her passion for clean and safe water and the need for water source protection; and

“Whereas the Minister of the Environment has indicated her intention to introduce legislation on water source protection, which is a final and key recommendation to be implemented under Justice Dennis O’Connor’s report on the Walkerton inquiry; and

“Whereas the Minister of the Environment has announced expert panels that will make recommendations to the minister on water source protection legislation; and

“Whereas the Ministry of the Environment will now be responsible for policing nutrient management; and

“Whereas the citizens of Ontario will be expecting a standing committee of the Legislature to hold province-wide public hearings on water source protection legislation;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario and the Ministry of the Environment to immediately place a moratorium on the development of site 41 until the water source protection legislation is implemented in Ontario. We believe the legislation will ... affect the design of site 41 and the nearby water sources.”

I’m pleased to sign my name to that and pass it to Laura.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### BUDGET MEASURES ACT (FALL), 2004

##### LOI DE 2004 SUR LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES (AUTOMNE)

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 30, 2004, on the motion for second reading of Bill 149, An Act to implement 2004 Budget measures, enact the Northern Ontario Grow Bonds Corporation Act, 2004 and amend various Acts / *Projet de loi 149, Loi mettant en oeuvre certaines mesures énoncées dans le Budget de 2004, édictant la Loi de 2004 sur la Société d’émission d’obligations de développement du Nord de l’Ontario et modifiant diverses lois.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bruce Crozier):** I’m told that it is time for questions and comments on Mr Fonseca’s speech last week. The member for Simcoe North.

**Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** I’m pleased to rise this afternoon to make a few comments on Mr Fonseca’s comments from last week. I want to zero in a little bit on Bill 149 and talk about something that I thought was one of the most mean-spirited things I’ve seen happen in this House since I’ve been here, and that was the movement to take Muskoka out of the north. I know my colleague Norm Miller will be talking about this in much more detail in a few moments.

I think the attempt was made specifically because a former finance minister, Ernie Eves, identified a serious problem in the north, in Muskoka, and thought it was a good effort, a smart move, to make Muskoka part of the north. Really and truly, if you’re heading north, that’s part of the Canadian Shield, and many, many small communities have a very difficult time in Muskoka. I can think of communities like Honey Harbour and MacTier, that I know of, and some of the smaller communities up around Gravenhurst and Bala, which have, no doubt, good seasonal businesses in the summer months. But in the winter months it’s a different story. They need any assistance they can get. It would be no different having a community like MacTier than some of the communities we would see in Sudbury, the Nickel Belt area, Sault Ste Marie or the Thunder Bay area.

So I think that was a very mean-spirited move by the finance minister. I wish he would use some common sense and put Muskoka in northern Ontario, as it has been in the past few years. It has been a benefit to the community and I think it’s safe to say that those few benefits have given Muskoka a chance to move in a forward direction. I know my colleague Norm Miller will be speaking a lot more on this particular piece of legislation very shortly, but I want to identify that as a serious concern on my part.

**Ms Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** It’s certainly my pleasure to say a few words at this time about Bill 149, which I believe is the third budget bill being brought forward.



I'm interested in the comments that were made just now because, really, the thing that I found most heartless about this particular bill is the fact that it got rid of the PST rebate for modification of vehicles for people with disabilities—handicapped drivers. People here know that there is constant concern about that raised by my colleague Michael Prue from Beaches-East York, particularly in regard to advocating for a constituent in his riding.

What happened was, the opportunity to apply for that rebate was, of course, taken away, but the government forgot to inform people and forgot to take that information off the Web site. So it was quite a debacle and there was quite a disappointment. In fact, my understanding, having talked to Mr Prue as recently as just a few minutes ago, is that although there have been undertakings by the minister that that's going to be addressed and the gentleman is going to have the rebate applied, he has not yet received it. So I certainly hope that, at least in that one instance, the heartlessness of that removal of the rebate is going to be reduced because that one person will get their rebate.

However, this bill in particular deals with a number of tax changes and a number of other kinds of changes. In fact, I think some 40 different statutes are affected by this bill. One, for example, is the elimination of capital tax. It's going to cost the Ontario treasury about \$1 billion when it's completely eliminated by 2012, which really is kind of backwards. Interestingly enough, the Liberals, when in opposition, opposed the Conservative move to do this very thing, and now they're doing it, which again shows how flip-floppy this government is.

1600

**Mr John Wilkinson (Perth-Middlesex):** I also am pleased to rise. I'll be supporting Bill 149, but I want to take this opportunity to speak about something non-partisan that is contained in the bill. Mr Speaker, you will recall that last spring that I introduced a private member's bill called Bill 40 that was passed, which was designed to protect firefighters and paramedics and police officers from having their personal insurance rates go up if they had an accident while on duty. All three parties agreed that that was an odious practice that had to stop.

During that period, being a rookie at trying to get a piece of legislation through, we were at clause-by-clause and our good friends at the Ontario Paramedic Association pointed out what they considered to be a flaw in the bill, that we were discussing the issue of ambulances but not emergency response vehicles. Unfortunately, I was of the mistaken impression that "emergency response vehicles" would cover all of these eventualities. After the bill had gone through committee, just before it received third reading approval, I discovered that error.

I reached out to two other members who had helped sponsor the bill with me, who helped me with the bill, the member for Leeds-Grenville and the member from Niagara Centre. Working in conjunction with the Minister of Finance, it was agreed that when budget papers were presented to this House subsequently, a small

amendment would be contained so that that clarification would be provided to protect all of the paramedics in the province of Ontario.

So I want to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Finance for making sure that Bill 149 contains that amendment. I think it's very important that paramedics are treated the same as firefighters and police officers. I want to thank the member for Leeds-Grenville and the member for Niagara Centre, from the two opposition parties, for agreeing last spring to make that happen. Again, I look forward to supporting Bill 149 and to further debate.

**Mr Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln):** I'm pleased to comment on my colleague from Mississauga East's remarks. One thing that I'd hoped the member would have said more about, and maybe he will in his summary, is this what I view as vindictive move by the government to take Muskoka out of the definition of northern Ontario. I know this member to be a very fair member, and I hope he's fair-minded and may support it if my colleague brings forward an amendment to allow Muskoka to stay in northern Ontario.

Certainly, Andy Mitchell, the local member who is the Minister of Agriculture, if I'm right, has fought hard at the federal level to maintain that definition, so hopefully it has some allies on the government benches who would support the opposition's call to maintain that definition of northern Ontario the same as the federal one.

I know people sometimes unfairly characterize Muskoka as being a tremendously wealthy region, and therefore it shouldn't benefit from these northern programs. But as I'm sure my colleague will indicate, it's quite the contrary: highly seasonal in its tourism attractions, which means the population that's year-round will have a higher unemployment rate than the rest of Ontario, and likely a lower income level across that area. All the health and social policy issues that often go with those economic indicators make it very close in those areas to northern Ontario, and therefore it should maintain that definition.

This is very important, because in the past things like the local hospitals have benefited from additional funding through the northern Ontario heritage fund. I was there as a minister. We had programs for technical improvements, for example, and basic care and maintenance. The northern Ontario health travel grant, which helps individuals who can't get service closer to home to come into a city like Toronto for service for their child—they would no longer be eligible for that if this bill passes. Certainly, initiatives that help tourism, like the Gravenhurst wharf project and help for the snowmobile trails, will no longer exist if this bill is passed without amendments.

So I support my colleague from Parry Sound-Muskoka, who has fought like a tiger to maintain that definition of northern Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Mississauga East has two minutes to reply.

**Mr Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 149. I want to acknowledge all those who

have spoken to Bill 149: the member from Simcoe North, the member from Hamilton East, the member for Perth-Middlesex and the member from Erie-Lincoln.

Bill 149 is a bill that will enrich the lives of all Ontarians for today and tomorrow, a very balanced bill. It's going to provide a number of measures to improve the lives of Ontarians: the apprenticeship training tax credit; the gradual elimination of capital tax; the replacing of a number of tax credits that are not performing as they should—when change is needed, this government makes sure that it makes those changes; the northern Ontario grow bonds; and the Ontario commercialization investment funds program.

On that note, the Ontario commercialization investment funds program is really going to harness all the great work that's being done in colleges and universities and the research that's being performed in these institutions. What we want to do is make sure all of those spinoffs can be commercialized and leveraged to help our economy; also, within the apprenticeship training tax credit, make sure we do have a knowledge-based economy, and that all Ontarians are well-trained and well-skilled to, once again, ensure that we have a strong economy today and well into our future.

This government has achieved a great deal this fiscal year. Through responsible management, our economy is stronger and our finances are healthier than ever. We have an improved health care system and a stronger economy. We're working toward a more efficient government so that we can have those precious dollars to spend on great services for Ontarians.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate.

**Mr Norm Miller (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** It's my pleasure to join in the debate this afternoon on Bill 149, An Act to implement 2004 Budget measures, enact the Northern Ontario Grow Bonds Corporation Act, 2004 and amend various Acts.

Before I start, I would like to point out that today, visiting in the Legislature, is page Danika Hawthorne's mother, Sherri Hawthorne, who is in the west members' gallery, so we can all give her a warm welcome here this afternoon. I had the pleasure of going out to lunch with Danika in her first week here as a page. She's a delightful young woman and is representing South River and area very well here at the Legislature.

This afternoon we're talking about Bill 149. Unfortunately, Bill 149 is bad news for the people of Muskoka. I'd like to talk a bit about the process to remove Muskoka from the north.

First of all, the process started on May 18 in the provincial budget. Hidden at the bottom of page 96, I believe it was, there was a reference to returning to traditional boundaries for northern Ontario. There was no mention of the word "Muskoka" whatsoever in that budget. It was only late in the evening, after the budget, that I noticed that particular line. There was no consultation with the people of Muskoka, who are greatly affected by this legislation.

We have in schedule 27 of the budget bill the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Act. The amendment to the North-

ern Ontario Heritage Fund Act removes a reference to the district municipality of Muskoka. Schedule 28, the Northern Services Boards Act: The amendment to the Northern Services Boards Act removes the reference to the district municipality of Muskoka.

I think the government is confusing those who cottage in Muskoka with those who live and work in Muskoka. When you really look at income levels in Muskoka, it's a very strong point why Muskoka should not be taken out of the north. When you compare that to the rest of northern Ontario, the median family income, based on Stats Canada 2001 statistics for most areas of northern Ontario, Muskoka is lower than the great majority of them. For example, Ontario's median family income is \$61,024. Muskoka is more than \$10,000 below that, \$50,713, as compared to North Bay, which is certainly in the north, \$53,978, Thunder Bay, \$59,580, Kenora, \$62,990, or the Minister of Northern Development and Mines' own riding, Sudbury, \$56,118. That's where the government is confusing the wealthy cottage owners who come up and spend a short time, usually in the summer, in Muskoka with those who are there year-round, struggling to eke out a living. By removing Muskoka from the north, it's going to hurt the year-round residents of Muskoka. It's going to hurt in many different ways.

#### 1610

**Health care:** The two hospitals in Muskoka, the Huntsville hospital and the Bracebridge hospital, have benefited significantly from northern Ontario heritage fund investments. In Bracebridge, the PACS system, the digitalization of images, was made possible through an investment of the northern Ontario heritage fund. In Huntsville, they've had many programs, usually about \$250,000 a year, that have benefited from investments by the northern Ontario heritage fund. For the individual citizens of Muskoka, being able to partake in the northern health travel grant to assist in transportation costs—just yesterday, I received an e-mail from Bala from some seniors on a fixed income who were very concerned that, for them, it may mean not being able to access medical care because they just don't have the funds to make the long trip for necessary medical help. So it is going to hurt the people of Muskoka.

The history of this: They introduced it in May. Then, after a question in the Legislature that I asked of the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Finance agreed to meet in late June or early July with the mayors of Muskoka. They went down and met with Mr Sorbara. What did he say? Well, he said that he wasn't going to change his mind about removing Muskoka from the north, but he was going to assist with transition.

I'm a little disappointed in what has happened since then, because there are some huge projects going on in Muskoka right now that the government had made commitments to. I don't care whether it was the past Conservative government or the current Liberal government. In the eyes of the town of Gravenhurst, it's still the government.

For example, the Muskoka wharf project is an absolutely huge project for the town of Gravenhurst—over

\$60 million—and the biggest thing happening in that town. In December 2001, the government of Ontario approved the investment of \$5 million by the northern Ontario heritage fund in that project. From that time forward, the town of Gravenhurst and its partners—the historical foundation, the private sector partners—have been working as quickly as possible to start the project. All kinds of construction is going on. For the town of Gravenhurst, this is a huge project.

They did what was right. They got a lot of public input into the project, and it did change as a result of that public input. They would have been irresponsible not to go through that process. And I think the project is a better project because of going through that process of getting public input.

As I say, December 2001 is when the original approval for \$5 million happened. Then all of a sudden, in January 2004, the town was asked to resubmit their application—on a previously approved approval. Now we learn that that approval has been halved. So now the project is going to receive \$2.5 million, not \$4.9 million.

This is very difficult for the town of Gravenhurst, and it's unfair the way it has happened. They've been going about their business, getting all the approvals as quickly as possible, going through a consultative process—which is more than can be said for the government—and then they get the rug pulled out from under them three quarters of the way through the project. For the town of Gravenhurst, I think their total tax revenue from property taxes is something like \$4.8 million, so this is half their annual taxes, and it's a significant challenge. The mayor, I know, is concerned that it may jeopardize the financial stability of the town.

I look at some of the local newspapers:

“Wharf Cut Unjustified: Town.

“Town of Gravenhurst staff and politicians maintain that the government's claim that changes to the Muskoka wharf project are responsible for the significant reduction in funding for the project are unfounded.

“I don't believe there is merit in their reasons for reducing the funding,” said Mayor John Klinck. “The project got larger and we were given assurances that the full amount of funding would be forthcoming and we acted on good faith. If you go searching for a reason to withdraw or cancel funds, you'll find one, but you don't do it when a commitment has been made and someone has acted on that commitment.”

You know, I think what the government has done is absolutely awful. It's partisan, and it's hurtful for the town of Gravenhurst.

**Mr Hudak:** Did your Liberal candidate talk about that in his campaign?

**Mr Miller:** There was no mention whatsoever in the campaign. We didn't hear a darned thing about Muskoka being considered to be taken out of the north until they actually did it, and there was no consultation.

Look at what Gord Adams, chair of the district of Muskoka, said: “Adams insulted, Calls Timing of Northern ‘Chop’ a Slap in the Face.” You see, after the

meeting with Mr Sorbara, they got a promise that Mr McGuinty would meet with them before Muskoka was removed from the north. The meeting happened to be set up for a couple of weeks from then. Well, it happened to be the day after the government introduced this bill, Bill 149, to remove Muskoka from the north. Even though they saw the bill was introduced, they still came down to meet with Mr McGuinty. But what happened? He bailed on them, didn't even attend the meeting and instead had the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing meet with them. So, “Adams insulted, Calls Timing of Northern ‘Chop’ a Slap in the Face....

“In what Adams called ‘a slap in the face,’ the province introduced legislation that would finalize Muskoka's cut from the north just hours before the meeting was to take place. In addition, both the Premier and Sorbara cancelled their attendance.

“Adams said he told the minister that he found the province's actions ‘quite insulting.’” Party politics were blamed.

The mayor of Muskoka Lakes, Susan Pryke, adds some comments: “Muskoka Lakes mayor Susan Pryke said she too reiterated to the minister that seasonal residents alter the assessment of the average family income in the district.” So you have the wealthy cottagers, who do not give a true picture of the real people who live and work there year-round.

“Gravenhurst mayor John Klinck views Muskoka's cut from northern Ontario as ‘party politics’—of the worst kind, I might add.

“I continue to believe that Muskoka is part of the north because of historical significance, socio-economic indicators and the area's physical attributes.

“The district was founded based on its raw resources, lumbering and tourism. We have no commercial or industrial tax base, we have a huge amount of managed forest and the people who live and work in this area make less money than many in communities further north of Muskoka,” the mayor said.” That was Mayor Klinck of Gravenhurst.

“The decision was not based on any evidence or historical facts,” said Adams. As a result, he said he and others believe the decision is ‘punitive.’

“What else are we to make of it?” asked Adams. “Other than the fact that a couple of ministers have taken it upon themselves to penalize Muskoka?”

That tells you what the mayors and elected officials in Muskoka think. Gord Adams has also pointed out that it wasn't just in 1999 that Muskoka became part of the north. Muskoka was classified as part of northern Ontario in the mid-1960s, until the electoral boundaries changed and Muskoka and Georgian Bay were lumped together. That was when Muskoka was connected to southern Ontario through the northern Simcoe area of Midland-Penetanguishene as part of this riding. Back then, Muskoka was told it couldn't be part of the north because that would mean Simcoe would have to qualify as well. The realignment of boundaries took place in the late 1990s, and I might point out that the federal government

recognizes Muskoka as being part of the north. In fact, in the election campaign, the Prime Minister was in the riding. And what did he say?

**Mr Hudak:** Paul Martin?

**Mr Miller:** This is Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada: "As far as I'm concerned, when I came up here, I was coming to northern Ontario. Unless there's been a tectonic shift in the Precambrian plates, I'm still, as far as the federal government and all our programs are concerned, in northern Ontario." He added, "I don't agree with that decision, and I'm certainly prepared to do whatever I can to help in that regard." That was the Prime Minister of Canada when he visited the riding. So the federal government recognizes Muskoka as being part of the north, and continues to recognize Muskoka as being part of the north.

If you look at Ontario, northern Ontario is comprised of districts; southern Ontario is comprised of counties. After this change is made, Muskoka will be the only district not in northern Ontario.

Muskoka was created 135 years ago, and for 110 of those years Muskoka was part of the north, so it isn't something that happened in 1999 when Parry Sound-Muskoka became one riding.

1620

Muskoka going out of the north affects many different programs in Muskoka, programs that you don't think about. For example, the YWCA runs a program called Girlz Unplugged, which teaches about violence and helps protect young women against violence. Unfortunately, that was funded through the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, and there's no longer funding for that program. So the program is unfunded. Luckily, for this year, they made a presentation to the district of Muskoka, and the district of Muskoka recognized the value of that program and is going to fund it for this year. But that is another of the valuable programs that are funded by this.

We have to look at other decisions this government has made which are punitive and, you have to say, partisan in nature. Look at the closing of the Frost Centre. If ever a decision was ill-considered, to save a measly, I believe it's \$1.3 million a year—and once again, without consultation. They have made a decision—a very unwise decision, in my opinion—to close the Leslie M. Frost Centre. They made the decision, and a week later it was pretty much closed. Wouldn't it have made a lot more sense to keep it open and tell the people in the communities interested that unless we find ways of saving \$1.3 million in operating costs, then six months or a year later we are going to close it? I can tell you there are all kinds of groups that would have come out of the woodwork to help save the Leslie M. Frost Centre. I know the member from Haliburton-Victoria-Brock, Laurie Scott, and I will continue to fight to see the Frost Centre reopen.

**Mr Hudak:** What if they rename it the Sorbara Centre; will that help?

**Mr Miller:** To be honest, we'd be fine with that. If that's what it takes to get the Frost Centre reopened, I

would be fine with it, without question. But that's another example of a program that has been very worthwhile. The centre has been closed in a partisan way that I'm very upset about.

Getting back to Bill 149, I have a little problem with some of the other actions and some of the other things that will be carried out with this bill. There are some tax credits which are quite significant and are being cancelled by this bill. This act cancels nine tax credits worth \$85 million, including the provincial sales tax on vehicles purchased by those with disabilities. What is the logic of the government cancelling a tax rebate to help assist those with disabilities to purchase a necessary vehicle?

**Mr Hudak:** A tax hike on the disabled.

**Mr Miller:** Basically, yes, that is a tax hike. I would just love to hear the logic of why they're cancelling it. I think they said not enough people have taken advantage of it. We've heard questions about people who took advantage of it because they saw it was still listed on the Web site of the government, and now the government won't honour it. I have a lot of problems with cancelling that tax rebate.

The Ontario home ownership savings plan: What about young families who are trying to buy their first house? They had this program, very beneficial for first-time homeowners, to help make it possible for them to buy their first home. Now we see that tax savings plan, if this legislation passes, is being cancelled. We're at a time when we're seeing a drop in housing starts, so it seems like a very bad time to be closing a very worthwhile tax credit.

The workplace child care tax incentive is another very worthwhile tax credit, and it's very surprising that the government would be cancelling this. The workplace accessibility tax incentive is another very worthwhile tax incentive that's being cancelled. The corporate income tax incentive for self-generated electricity is repealed, and it's repealed retroactively, back to November 25, 2002.

I would have to argue that I can't see the sense in cancelling any of these tax credits. They all seem very worthwhile to me, and I'm quite surprised that the government has taken it upon itself to cancel these tax credits.

I only have a little bit of time left. Obviously, I'll be voting against this bill, in particular because it's removing Muskoka from the north, but also because it's cancelling these many worthwhile tax credits.

I would like to bring up the answer by the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to my question about Highway 17 today, because it was basically a non-answer. Our leader, Mr Tory, and I are going to be visiting Thunder Bay later this week. We'll be there for a couple of days. The last time I was there, the number one issue, when I went to the cancer care centre, when I met with business people, was the fact that they want Highway 17 four-laned from Nipigon to Shabaqua Corners, because at that section, there's just one highway; it's Highway 17/11. They told me that it closed something

like a hundred times last year, and it's a real safety concern. Yet we've seen no plans, no announcements by this government to four-lane that section of highway.

I asked the Minister of Northern Development and Mines a very serious question today about that section of highway and also about the section east of Nipigon, where we've seen many washouts in October. It was closed for many days at a time, and people had to drive all night to get around these washouts. And yet the minister basically gave me a non-answer this afternoon, so I was very disappointed by that. I think I'm going to have to ask him again before I get up north.

I'll be voting against this bill. I'm very disappointed to see the government going ahead with its plan to remove Muskoka from the north.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Ms Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** I'm very pleased to rise today to obviously support this wonderful bill. Just in response to Mr Miller, I must say how pleased I am to hear Mr Miller's support for the northern Ontario grow bonds plan. That's terrific, and we thank you for that.

Under the apprenticeship training tax credit, I think it's very advisable to understand that according to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce's 2003 skilled trades survey, within the next 15 years, 52% of skilled tradespeople are expect to retire. This apprenticeship training tax credit will enable fine institutions like Mohawk College in Hamilton West to encourage young people to participate in this new skilled training.

We are investing in our workforce by transforming Ontario's apprenticeship training program, and we invested \$11.7 million additional monies annually, to be invested by 2006-07, to expand the number of young people registering in apprenticeship training programs. This is a very important component of developing a very strong and healthy economy in Ontario.

Our investment in apprenticeship will address the expected wave of retirements, as I mentioned a minute ago, in skilled trades and will certainly help to build the kind of strong and prosperous Ontario that we are all looking forward to. That means, in fact, good jobs and a better future for our young people.

Speaking of futures for our young people, I was really surprised to read the Sudbury Star reporting that Mr Klees had said that, in his mind, "northern Ontario is northern Ontario," and Muskoka is not. That was really contrary to some of the other material that we heard. He went on to say, "I think we have to draw the line somewhere and I'm not sure that the Muskoka region qualifies." That was shocking, actually.

I thank you for this time to support our bill.

**Mr John O'Toole (Durham):** I first want to stand and acknowledge the tenacity and hard work of the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka in standing up for his riding, and also the punitive action taken by the Minister of Finance in eliminating that area from entitlement to the northern Ontario heritage fund and other opportunities like the northern health travel grant. It's punitive,

unnecessary and unkind. It's one more symptom of the kind of government we're dealing with. They don't care and they don't listen, specifically to the area where Mr Miller operates.

Even his question today to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines is a further indication of saying one thing and then doing another thing. Mr Miller's question on Highway 17 was about public safety and accessibility, and just living in otherwise difficult circumstances in the north. There was no answer, and that's the tragedy. There was a lot of blah, blah, blah and no answer.

**1630**

I look at this bill and it's really a tax hike by any other name. Bill 149 is a rather onerous bill. I'll be speaking on it later. Hopefully our whip, Mr Dunlop, will give me some time—I put that on notice. There's actually \$85 million in clawbacks. What they're actually doing here is alarming. If people of Ontario knew and listened—because we'll be outlining this. I'm surprised. The minister of family and children's services should know that the workplace child care tax incentive created spaces for working families to bring children to the workplace. The employer was incented to provide appropriate care and accommodations for the children. Cancelled, not one thoughtful—what they want is a public sector, public-administered, regulated, blah, blah, blah. No flexibility is what I'm concerned about.

There are other things, and with your attention, Speaker, I ask for unanimous consent—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you. The member for Hamilton East.

**Ms Horwath:** It's my pleasure to rise and make comments on the debate provided by the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka. I thought that his comments were extremely sensitive to the area that he represents. I thought he raised a number of significant issues, not only in regard to the specifics about Bill 149 and how it's going to effect his particular riding and the people that live there, but also, quite frankly, in regard to the processes undertaken by the government in terms of this particular bill and other pieces of legislation that they brought forward. And that is really just a lack of consultation and a lack of sensitivity to the various ridings that all of us represent across Ontario.

When I get the opportunity—in about a minute from now, or maybe five minutes or so from now—to begin my comments on Bill 149, some of the themes that were raised by the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka will be ones that I will follow up on as well. Not particularly the ones around his riding, of course, but some of the ones that he was raising near the end of his comments, those ones dealing with the tax cuts that are being provided in this bill, and the way that the government is favouring the corporate sector, particularly the banks and insurance companies, around capital tax credits that they're giving; and the way this government in fact has been complaining day after day in question period about their lack of ability to get things done right away, that everything's

going to take five years before anything is realized in terms of their agenda, but they're giving away money left, right and centre in Bill 149, money that could be very well used to enhance some of the programs that we've been raising that are needed so much in our communities across this province.

I look forward to the opportunity of reviewing for the watching public, the voters of Ontario, so they know exactly what this government is doing. They can't hide behind the bluster of their question period non-answers they have to account for things like Bill 149.

**Mr Michael Gravelle (Thunder Bay-Superior North):** I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to respond to the member for Parry Sound-Muskoka's remarks, particularly as he talked about the highway strategy that we are developing in northern Ontario. I spent eight years in this Legislature when the previous government was in place, and almost every day I would get up in the House, or write a letter, and ask for some support. So I think that when you bring your leader up north, member for Parry Sound-Muskoka, make sure you tell the truth, which is that you wouldn't go near any of the issues, you wouldn't make any of the improvements.

Finally we've got a government that actually is listening to northerners and that had a northern section in its budget for the first time. Go back in all your budgets; you ignored the north completely. We do have a northern highway strategy, which is based on really developing and improving our roads in the north—it will be the first time. So I hope that you'll tell the truth when you're up there.

The fact is, year after year after year, you rejected our pleas for that, and in northwestern Ontario we particularly suffered from it. So when say you went and spoke to the chambers of commerce, let me tell you about grow bonds. Grow bonds were recommended by the Northwestern Ontario Associated Chambers of Commerce. They went to the previous government and said, "We want to do this." They would not listen to them. Our leader at the time, Dalton McGuinty, later to become Premier, said, "We're going to endorse this, we're going to do it," and we are now doing it.

Mr Miller himself has endorsed that as being a good government policy. But all I can tell you—and I have the Minister of Transportation to back me up—is that our northern highway strategy is one we're very, very proud of.

Mr O'Toole, you shouldn't be shaking your hand at me either. The fact is, your government wouldn't do anything to help improve the roads in northwestern Ontario. We are going to do exactly that. In fact, we've got two passing lanes being built as we speak between Thunder Bay and Mackenzie, Pass Lake—things that wouldn't have happened under the previous government. We've got cost-sharing agreements between the federal and provincial governments, which the minister is very proud of. We're moving forward and making these things happen. I suggest to you that when you go up to Thunder Bay later this week, make sure you tell the truth and remind them of what you did not do in the past.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka has up to two minutes.

**Mr Miller:** Thank you for the comments from the member from Hamilton West, who talked about grow bonds, and I would like to point out that I am in favour of grow bonds. I'm glad to see the government moving forward on that. I hope they don't mess it up by having all the value of it lost in too much administration costs. We certainly need more access to capital for businesses in northern Ontario, although I haven't heard anything lately—the government has been strangely quiet—about the northern tax incentive zone. I know that's something the people in northern and northwestern Ontario would like to see.

I would also like to point out that part of the government's election plan was northern councils. It has been 14 months since the Minister of Northern Development and Mines was appointed. On November 9, he did a press release, saying they're identifying potential candidates. How can it take so long to make northern councils? You're moving at a snail's pace, for crying out loud, at about the same pace the minister is moving on Highway 69. I drove up to Sudbury last week, expecting to see all kinds of construction. If there was anything the Minister of Northern Development and Mines talked about in opposition, it was Highway 69. And what have they announced? They announced 700 meters, and last year they announced two kilometres, I think it was. At that rate, it's going to be about 157 years before you complete the four-laning of Highway 69. And what about Highway 11? We haven't seen too much going on with Highway 11 either.

I look forward to going up to Thunder Bay. Perhaps the member from Thunder Bay-Superior North will be there to greet us and welcome us to the riding. I know the people of Thunder Bay-Superior North are very keen to see the four-laning of Highway 17, and I'll certainly be pushing for that at every opportunity. Because when I have been there in the past, one of the top issues they have raised is the four-laning of Highway 17 from Nipigon to Shabaqua Corners.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Ms Horwath:** It's my pleasure to enter the debate on Bill 149. The first thing I'd like to say is that it's apparent from this bill that the government has a severe house-keeping problem, and I'm not just talking about the kind of housekeeping that means sweeping things under the carpet or the cobwebs that are sitting on the book of election promises of the government; rather, I'm referring to Bill 149 itself.

The reason I would call it a major housekeeping problem and explain it that way is because, quite frankly, Bill 149 is the result of a government that's been spinning its wheels, backtracking and letting things pile up for probably about 14 months now. As a matter of fact, this bill amends about 40 statutes, as I mentioned already in my questions and comments, with about 250 different changes. Quite frankly, sandwiched in between the pages of this massive bill are some proposals that the

New Democrats will never and would never be able to support.

The biggest reason I would never be able to vote in favour of this particular bill is because I cannot in good conscience stand and let the finance minister break yet another promise to the people of Ontario. There have been too many promises broken already. We hear them being raised day after day in question period by the NDP and by the opposition. What we're doing on this side of the House is really providing an opportunity to help the government save face, particularly right now. It's a crucial time for that to be done, and there's very little face left to be saved, as you know. But I think that, by debating this bill and by voting against, it gives the government that opportunity.

What we see reinforced with announcement after announcement and initiative after initiative is a really bad case of election amnesia. They just plain forget what it was they offered the voters of Ontario back in 2003. They just plain forget what it was they promised. Of course, they're coming up with an agenda that doesn't look anything like what the people voted them in to do. It's pretty frustrating on this side of the House when you have a bill, Bill 149, with some 40 pieces of legislation being affected and with some 250 changes in those 40 statutes that are being affected. A good pile of them, a good chunk of them, in no way reflect what the government said it was going to do for the people of Ontario.

**1640**

Maybe it's not a case of election amnesia; maybe it's a case of a duplicitous government that never intended to keep its promises. I wouldn't want to say that, though, because the people of Ontario are extremely disappointed. They're disappointed in what they're seeing, and although that would be my suspicion, if that's what's happening, that there was never any intention to keep those promises—if that is the case, that would be duplicitous.

However, I think what's really happening and what's really obvious, at the very least, at the minimum—so if it's not duplicitous and if it's not election amnesia, it's certainly a government that's prepared to play fast and loose with the promises they made to the people of Ontario. They're playing fast and loose with their commitments, and that way of playing is reflected on page after page in Bill 149.

I believe that a promise is a promise. I'm astounded that the members across the way are yet again prepared to break more promises. They talked in questions and comments just this very afternoon about how much they support this bill, how much pride they have in it, but they're supporting and lauding yet another documentation in black and white, in writing, broken promises over and over again. I'm going to give a couple of examples in case people who are watching are not quite sure what I'm getting at in terms of the broken promises that are once again in front of us in debate in this Legislature.

The first one is that this bill eliminates the capital tax on paid-up capital of corporations like big banks and

insurance companies. In the election, the Liberals said they would keep the capital tax. So what would that be? That would be a broken promise. Eliminating this particular capital tax will cost the Ontario treasury, over the time frame till 2012, \$1 billion over the next eight years. This is not what the government promised to do. They promised to do the opposite: They were going to keep it. Now they're eliminating it. What do you call that? You call that another example of McGuinty broken promises.

**Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** And who is this money going to, in particular?

**Ms Horwath:** In particular, the lion's share of this money is going to be the big banks and the insurance companies. I think a full one quarter, \$250 million, of this particular capital tax giveaway goes to the big players.

**Mr Marchese:** Because they need the money.

**Ms Horwath:** Of course they need the money; we know that they're not getting month-after-month, quarter-after-quarter increases in their profits. Of course they are, and we're all watching as those profits skyrocket in the bank sector, particularly shaking our heads wondering, "How do we get in on that good deal?" I guess we get in on that good deal if we become banks and get more giveaways from the government of Ontario.

Eliminating this capital tax is an irresponsible move. It's a move that the New Democrats would never do. This is an active government that is more concerned about rewarding its corporate friends in the bank and insurance sector particularly, and its donors, than it is about ensuring a fair shake for regular, average Ontario taxpayers like those in the riding of Hamilton East whom I represent.

As corporate taxes surge, services are sliding. In my home community, there's an urgent need for things like second-stage housing, child care, low-income supports, affordable rents, all of these things that could be paid for by that tax if it were maintained. But no; instead, the government decides it's going to be giving big insurance and big banks a tax cut. That is not going to solve any of the concerns that are happening in my community this very day.

Banks, insurance companies and other financial institutions are going to get the greatest fraction, the greatest amount, of that particular tax cut. Canada's six big banks pay \$250 million of the roughly \$1 billion in capital taxes. So that \$250 million—straight to the big banks.

As over the next couple of years we continue to see, in the media reports, quarter after quarter, annual report after annual report, all of our big banks soaring in profits, we only need to look in one direction to find out why they're doing better month after month, quarter after quarter, year after year. They need to put that success, that gift, that resounding growth in their profits at the feet of the government. They can lie down and thank the government for this wonderful gift that in the meantime is going to prevent people in my community, for example, from getting the very basic needs for survival.

I can tell you what's happening. The dollars are going to be siphoned away from the programs and services that people need and put into the hands of the corporate shareholders and offshore owners. That's a lot of bunk, if you ask me.

It's interesting. In the city of Hamilton we recently had our social planning and research council do a report that talks about the continuing face of poverty in our community. In fact, one of things that is indicated in that report, not surprisingly, is that there continues to be a widening gap between the rich and the poor in this province but particularly in the city of Hamilton.

I've got to tell you, quite frankly, it's policies like this particular bill, Bill 149, where the government says, quite clearly, "We want to do this. We are proactively putting money in the hands of the rich and taking away from people who need it the most," because if that billion dollars was there, there would certainly be much more money available to help people who are living in poverty in the city of Hamilton. It not only says that there's a growing gap, but what it also says is that the people who are gaining from these very policies in Bill 149 are gaining at a greater rate and those who are at the lower end are losing at a greater rate. That gap just keeps widening and widening, and it's not by accident that these kinds of things are happening. In fact, it's the direct result of policies like these where governments refuse to recognize that they can't keep giving to the rich while they take away from the poor.

Just when the public thought that that crazy era of irresponsible corporate tax cuts had ended, here go the Liberals acting exactly like the Conservatives. Members of the public now see even more clearly—very clearly—that there's virtually no difference between those guys over there and these guys over here—no difference at all. The Liberals are doing exactly what the Conservatives would do. The only difference would be that the Tories would probably do it all by 2008. The Liberals are phasing it in over four years or so and 2012 is when it's going to be finally completely incorporated.

Do you know what? People in the province of Ontario need to remember that this government complains constantly about being cash-strapped. They complain constantly about the reason they're breaking their promises. The reason it's taking them so long to implement anything is because, quite frankly, "Oh, we have no money." How the heck do you expect to have money if you keep giving it away to the banks, the insurance companies and the big guys?

Not a day goes by when we don't hear about their deficit woes, dire warnings of belt-tightening. Every time we ask a question in the House, they say the same thing; they say they're broke. But eliminating the capital tax is going to mean the government is going to lose revenue at a time when the thing they need most is—guess what?—revenue. So \$1 million gone in 2004-05, \$40 million in 2005-06, \$80 million in 2006-07, \$110 million in 2007-08.

Let me say again for the people who are at home watching this afternoon, for the people who are tuned in

but really couldn't quite believe what they heard, let me say it one more time: More than \$1 billion is going to be lost from the treasury when the capital tax is finally implemented in 2012. Think about it: \$1 billion lost at a time when affordable housing is stalled. The construction of new affordable housing has not begun in this province—certainly not a commitment being fulfilled by this government. Despite all the high hopes the government builds up, they are not building any affordable housing.

At a time when not-for-profit child care is not being implemented at any speed that anybody would call decent, that promise to the children of Ontario is not being fulfilled. Why is that? Because there's not enough money. Why isn't there enough money? Because it's going to tax breaks like this one—at a time when shelter beds and second-stage housing units are being reduced when in fact they should be increased, especially when you look at the weather we're having this very day with the snow; at a time when more and more people are slipping deeper and deeper into poverty; at a time when income supports for the most vulnerable are still not enough to live on and they're losing more ground every single day.

I've got to tell you, these are not just broad Ontario statistics. It's very disturbing when you come from a community like mine that has just been informed that in terms of poverty rates we're the highest in Ontario now—tied with one other community that I will not mention. Nonetheless, that is a disturbing thing. It's extremely disturbing to have to debate this bill, knowing the government is purposely taking dollars out of the treasury and giving them back to the richest and wealthiest corporations, and the rest of the people in the riding that I represent are left to suffer.

**1650**

I think about specifics. I think about the fact that just on Friday there was a demonstration in our local minister's office from the people from second-stage housing. Those women and those advocates are very concerned because they are having to cut back second-stage housing units in the city of Hamilton. Why do they have to do that? Because they're not getting funded. So here is a very direct service that could have been funded that's not being funded, as a direct result of the dollars being siphoned off to go to the banks and insurance companies.

Last week we had political science students here from McMaster. They were lobbying for the personal needs allowance of people who are living in second-level lodging in the city of Hamilton. These people are surviving on \$116 a month—\$116 a month to take care of all their personal needs. These McMaster students were out there, visiting these very vulnerable people. They were talking to them and they were being shown and being exposed to the lifestyle these people are forced to endure because there isn't enough money to get them through a whole month. I'm talking basic issues of dignity, basic issues of quality and life, and all they're asking for is an increase from \$116 to \$160 a month. The funny thing about it is that that's the same request



they've had on the table for probably five or six years, and it's going on deaf ears. That's something that could very easily significantly change not only the lives of those people in second-level lodging homes in Hamilton but also the very neighbourhoods in which those lodging homes exist. When those people begin to have some more dignity, when they have a bit of money in their pocket that they could actually spend on the things they need, it makes for better communities, healthier neighbourhoods and a better economy.

It's very disturbing to see that while the little guy is getting nothing, the big guys are getting everything. It surprises me that any government member would vote to give money back to the highly profitable corporations and hold money back from the people in the province who are most in need. The Conservatives—maybe they made the cuts in the first place, so nothing they're going to do is going to surprise me. But for this government to follow the exact same path, I really do have to say shame on you. As usual, it seems like the little guy is getting the big boot.

I'm here to speak for the little guy because, you know what, it's not unknown to the people of this province that the New Democrats are often the people who are speaking for the little person in Ontario who deserves these dollars the most; not the mammoth corporations that already have all the advantages and that obviously have the ear of the government, but the regular person living in a community, trying to make ends meet, trying to understand, and in fact reeling from all the promises this government has managed to break in the last 14 months.

There seems to be a lot of heartlessness—I think that was the word used by one of the members earlier today—about what's in the bill. I have to tell you, giving a \$1-billion tax cut to the most well-off corporations is only the start, particularly when you juxtapose that against the growing amount of child poverty and the fact that there is so much homelessness and hurting in this province.

The bill also cuts the wheels out from under people with disabilities. The rebate, as we have already heard, for the modifications of vehicles used to transport disabled people is going to end with the passage of this bill. As you may know, the government will say, "Well, this money is not really being cut; it's being reallocated to the March of Dimes, and they're the ones that are going to be dealing with this program." But the bottom line is that the March of Dimes is in fact a means-tested program, and many people who qualified under the straight tax rebate program are not going to qualify under the March of Dimes program. In fact, people are going to find that where they were eligible before, they may not be eligible now. Once there was a program of help, with this particular tax credit, for people with disabilities and their vehicles. It's now going to be clawed back; it's going to be whittled away. Why? So that the government can give its corporate friends a really good tax cut.

There are many other acts that are being amended. I have a list of probably a page and a half long, everything

from the Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations Act, Capital Investment Plan Act, Gasoline Tax Act, Ministry of Revenue Act, and it goes on and on. I'm not going to read them all, because I already have a quite a sore throat. The bottom line is that it's an omnibus bill that gives the government—you know, it's a funny thing; my understanding is, and of course I wasn't here, that the government in fact was, when they were in opposition, very critical of the Conservative government with omnibus bills. My understanding is that they often railed against the omnibus bills when the previous government brought them forward. The bottom line is, look at what happens when they become government. They do the exact same thing. They bring through these omnibus bills and can't understand why the rest of us are a bit concerned about it.

The bottom line is, the Liberals said a lot of things in opposition, as we know, and they said a lot during the election campaign, and we can really see that all of it needed to be taken with a grain of salt. In fact, it needed to be taken with a whole salt mine, as far as I'm concerned.

They said they were going to be aggressive with energy efficiency. What does this bill do? It terminates the PST rebate for energy-efficient appliances. One of the first and most practical, affordable steps any family can make to cut its energy bill is to get rid of those old, hydro-sucking appliances and get those new Energy Star, high-efficiency type of models. But, of course, that's gone. It makes no sense at all that it's been cancelled.

There are many other things this bill does: rebates for converting the home to use high-end solar and wind power, something the government's touting as a new, progressive move in energy efficiency or energy savings or green power. But you know what? The bottom line is, your average household, your average Ontarian is never going to be able to put solar panels on their roof. It's just silly. So the government is claiming this is the big green issue here but, really, when you look at it, the government killed the program that would be the most effective in assisting the most families across Ontario, the most households, and in fact put something in place that very few are going to be able to take advantage of.

Another thing is things that they could have done. They could have dealt with the fact that the securities legislation could have been tightened up to save some of those people who are being bilked by scoundrels in that industry. Of course, that wasn't done. I've got lots of details on that, but I'm running out of time already. My goodness, how time flies when you're having fun.

The personal income tax incentives related to corporate tax incentives like the graduate transition tax credit, the workplace child tax credit, the workplace accessibility tax credit, the educational technology tax credit—somebody else mentioned that in their speech earlier today. The bottom line is, the government will say, "Nobody ever took advantage of any of those things anyway." Well, maybe what the government should have done was found a way to make those particular credits

accessible so that people could get the kind of help they needed to have accessible workplaces, to have a place where people with disabilities could go to work and gain an income that was decent and could sustain them and their families over time. It's not good enough to say, "Oh, nobody used it." It's a matter of taking responsibility for making it a functioning opportunity for people with disabilities.

Those are my comments. Thank you for the opportunity.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence):** I listened to the member from Hamilton East. The question I have for her is, if she's talking about how this bill helps corporations and cuts their taxes, why did your party unanimously vote, along with the Conservatives, against our Bill 2, which rolled back \$2.3 billion in corporate tax cuts? You're going to have to explain that. I'm going to give you the opportunity to stand up and explain how you, who claims to be the great opponent of corporate tax cuts, the member from Hamilton East, voted against our party's commitment to roll back \$2.3 billion worth of tax cuts promised by the other party.

We had Bill 2, right here, An Act respecting fiscal responsibility. It says, "The Corporations Tax Act is amended." We rolled back those corporate taxes by \$2.3 billion. You voted with the Tories to keep those corporate tax cuts. I ask you to stand up on your feet to explain why your party voted unanimously to have those corporate tax cuts stay in the hands of the big corporations that you've just demonized.

She goes on talking about the capital tax. The capital tax is essentially a job killer. We're trying to create jobs. She talks about the fact that Hamilton needs jobs. You're not going to get jobs in Hamilton by whining about it. You're going to have to do something about it. So we want to get rid of this capital tax, which means that people can't hire people to work in companies, to create jobs. That's what the removal of the capital tax does.

So stop whining about it. Do something about it. Create some jobs for a change.

1700

**Mr Dunlop:** I thought the member from Hamilton East did an excellent job in her presentation. I thought she actually deserved more time, because she looked like she was just getting into it. I think she really brought out some good points.

I look at this bill, Bill 149, where the government is trying to put a couple of positive things in with a whole bunch of negatives. It's the \$85 million that bothers me. That's part of the money that came from the Ontario home ownership savings plan. I think that was a terrible move on the part of this government.

When there is a prediction that there will be a decline in the number of houses built in Ontario—we've already seen it this year and I understand it's estimated there will be a 12% decline next year—I can't understand why the government would not want to create an incentive to keep home building and home ownership alive and

strong in Ontario. Because at that rate all the folks in the trades and construction equipment suppliers get an opportunity to continue to make money, to invest in jobs and invest in the economy. Here we have a government that, in its very first kick at this economy, has decided to remove the Ontario home ownership savings plan, which is a plan that helps young people and first-time homebuyers. That's very disappointing.

I think a lot of people don't even realize this is happening at this point. It hasn't been well publicized. Certainly they haven't promoted it with any fancy press conferences or anything like that, but that is something that will hurt the economy of Ontario. It will hurt the jobs that will be created here and it will hurt young people trying to buy their first home in the province.

**Mr Marchese:** I want to congratulate my colleague from Hamilton East for her vigorous 20-minute presentation here. You could tell that the broken promises of the Liberal Party take more than 20 minutes to deliver. It takes at least one hour to cover them adequately. Twenty minutes doesn't do it, and she raced through it.

Don't you love my friend from Eglinton-Lawrence, Mike Colle, who says that the capital tax is a job killer? Doesn't that sound very much like Mike Harris when he was there before? What's the difference? Here he is defending a capital tax reduction, most of which will go to banks and insurance companies, and he says that by doing this, it will create jobs. He is protecting the banks and the insurance companies—banks and insurance companies that gouge you on a daily basis. He's saying that they need a \$250-million break from now through the next eight or 10 years. No, they don't, Mike Colle. They are gouging us. These people don't need my help, especially after you broke your promise that you wouldn't do it and then did. Not one cent is being spent on housing, but you're going to find \$250 million to give to the banks. Not one penny is going to create housing.

And look at the duplicitous thing they've done around the minister cancelling the retail sales tax rebate for vehicles. Ten million dollars cancelled for the retail sales tax rebate, and then the Minister of Children and Youth Services and the Minister of Community and Social Services go out on the lawn and announce \$10 million for vehicle modification. It's the same money, just turned around the same way. That's duplicitous, my friends. That's the Liberal government for you, creating jobs, giving money to the banks while you're left high and dry.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

The member for Peterborough.

**Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** I'm delighted to make some quick comments on the remarks of the member for Hamilton East. It's interesting: When you talk to people who are involved in the social services sector of this province, they'll tell you that the problem with poverty started with the NDP government, in 1993, when they froze the rates of ODSP. They kicked the poor people of this province right in the teeth. Remember, they froze ODSP in 1993.

But let me get going here. They voted against Bill 2. What a sorry day in this Legislature: The people who always tell you that they're the great people of social conscience, on that day, on Bill 2, got together with the Tories and the Albany Club and voted against the repealing of the private school tax credit. They voted against the corporate rollback of the tax cuts. They had a great lunch that day at the Albany Club, the silk-stocking socialists and the Conservatives having lunch together, discussing how they wanted to not repeal the private school tax credit and the second round of the corporate tax credit.

But let me tell you what this does for seniors in this province. For the first time since 1995, we're going to increase the municipal tax credit for seniors by 25%. That means that 685,000 deserving seniors in this province will get an increased municipal property tax credit to offset some of the downloading costs that were given to this province by that party when they were in government by our good friend Al Leach when he was Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. He offloaded all those things to municipalities that they couldn't support and saddled senior citizens in this province with increased property taxes. Now, we're going to relieve that burden with this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Hamilton East, you have two minutes to reply.

**Ms Horwath:** I find it very interesting. I want to thank the members from Eglinton-Lawrence, Simcoe North, my colleague from Trinity-Spadina and the member from Peterborough for their very interesting comments.

I have to say, the members on the government side certainly got riled up, and that's really good, because that tells me—it's the old adage that my mom used to say. She used to tell me, "Sticks and stones may break your bones, but you know what? Words will never hurt you." She always said to me, when people rely on mudslinging, when they rely on silly name-calling, it means they don't really have an argument to stand on. It means they're reaching for some way to discredit you, when they know very well that you've hit some really good arguments and put the issues on the table.

Quite frankly, that's what I saw from some of the members on the government side in their vehemence in trying to attack me personally. What they need to do is start realizing that they have a role to play in the prioritization of what their government is doing. It's they who have to account for that, not me, quite frankly. It's those people on the other side who need to understand that when they throw names and try to pretend to the public there is no reason why we should be opposing omnibus legislation—which they opposed every minute they had a chance when they were in opposition.

It's just a joke that they try to hide what they're doing by attacking the people who are doing their job and sticking up for the people of this province, letting them know all of the promises that are being broken by this government and all of the direction that those members

over there are taking. That's exactly the same as those people who got kicked out for that direction and put you in power. Shame on you. Shame on you for following the exact same road as your predecessor over here. You're the same people, and I think the people of Ontario recognize that. They very clearly understand it, and nothing you can say is going to help you now.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I think now we're ready for further debate.

**Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin):** I thank the House for the opportunity to speak to this bill, Bill 149. It is an important bill for quite a number of reasons. It's a comprehensive bill with a large number of sections. As a matter of fact, it's quite thick.

As a northern member, one of the things that I am particularly impressed with in this bill is the legislation to go forward with grow bonds. That is very, very important to those of us who represent northern Ontario constituencies.

In northern Ontario we have not participated in the growth that the rest of the province, quite frankly, has seen over the last decade or so. In northern Ontario we still see a decline of population. We see declining enrolments in our schools. We see fewer and fewer people in many of our communities. The last decade has not been a great time for the northern economy.

For the first time, in fulfilling an election commitment, we have decided and in this bill are going forward with northern Ontario grow bonds, the part of our northern Ontario prosperity plan which helps northern communities attract and retain investment and jobs. The proposed bill establishes the corporation that will make loans to businesses in northern Ontario. The northern Ontario grow bonds program will help new and expanding businesses in northern communities and improve opportunities for entrepreneurs in the north. If passed, the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines would administer this program, with the establishment of a northern Ontario grow bonds corporation reporting directly to the minister.

**1710**

I think that we on the government side are quite proud of this initiative. We know it doesn't solve every problem there is to solve in northern Ontario, but it is piece of the puzzle. We would expect, therefore, that all members of the House, from all political parties, will put aside their partisan rants and decide that supporting northern Ontario and northern Ontario grow bonds is a good thing to do and is something the north needs desperately. It is something I'm sure my friends from the other parties will want to support because it is just the right thing to do.

Another thing we are very interested in seeing in this particular bill is a section that deals with Ontario property tax credits as they relate to seniors. I think this is very important. I represent a constituency with a lot of folks with relatively low incomes who are in their senior years, and this bill will help them considerably. "The government is committed to ensuring that Ontario seniors live safely, with dignity, and as independently as possible."

What we're doing in this particular tax credit: This \$85-million initiative will benefit 685,000 senior families. It includes 33,000 senior families who do not currently benefit from this particular measure. The basic property tax credit would increase from \$500 to \$625, or by about 25%. It will leave about \$125 more in the pockets of low- and middle-income seniors this year and every year hereafter. The tax credit will continue to be income-tested. That is really important to the people I represent. It is money in their pockets.

The other end of the spectrum that we need to be talking about that's in this particular piece of legislation is the apprenticeship training tax credit. Our investment in apprenticeship will address the expected wave of retirements in the skilled trades. According to the Ontario Chamber of Commerce skilled trades survey, within the next 15 years, 52% of skilled tradespeople are expected to retire. I'll repeat that: Within 15 years, half of our skilled tradespeople are expected to retire. As well, 41% of the respondents, ie, the chamber of commerce, anticipate that they will face severe skills shortages in the industry within five years.

**Mr Tony Ruprecht (Davenport):** No; already now.

**Mr Brown:** My good friend from Davenport tells me that it's happening now, and it is, across the province, particularly right here in Toronto.

What this particular tax credit will do is pay \$5,000 of an eligible apprentice's salary each year for up to three years. That means good jobs and a better future for our young people. Corporations and other unincorporated businesses would be eligible for a 25% refundable tax credit on eligible expenditures incurred with respect to eligible apprenticeships in the construction, industrial, motor power and certain service trades. For small businesses with total payroll costs not exceeding \$400,000, the tax credit rate would be increased to 30%.

This is an important investment. It will transform our workplace apprenticeship training programs. That is not only good for those people enrolled in these apprenticeship training courses but it is critical for our economic prosperity.

As we think about the particular measures that are here in this bill, I want to point out what people may think are smaller technicalities, but they are important. For example, we're clarifying the definition of "permanent establishment" for the purposes of the employer health tax. What the heck does that mean? It means that if your place of business is in Ontario, you'll pay employer health tax for Ontario-based employees. So what does that mean? It means that sports teams and other large employers with establishments elsewhere will pay their full share of employer health tax, like the Blue Jays and other teams.

We're also making sure that stock options don't get preferential employer health tax treatment. That means you won't be able to have fancy deals that exempt you from paying taxes on some of your income.

We're making sure that municipal electric utilities don't get taxed twice when they reinvest sales of electricity assets into electricity.

We're making sure that people can't use foreign income-tax credits to get the Ontario tax reduction, which is targeted to those of most modest means.

**Mr Leal:** Another loophole closed.

**Mr Brown:** You're right: another loophole closed.

This is particularly important to me and to constituencies with a lot of First Nations people. We're facilitating the process for native fuel retailers to get refunds. I know that's particularly important to my friend Willie Pine and other people in that business.

We're closing the loopholes. We're making progress. We intend to create more jobs in the province of Ontario and come up with a fairer, more reasonable, more sensible tax regime.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I'm pleased to rise in response to this debate. I find it interesting that the member from Algoma-Manitoulin speaks about the desire of this government to create jobs and build economic stability. There isn't a day that goes by when there isn't some other bombshell dropped as a result of actions taken by this government, which, quite frankly, is shutting down places of employment and driving them out of the province.

Here's the latest. This is a press release I just got this afternoon. It's a news release from Bot Construction in Oakville, Ontario. It says, "A 'gag order' inserted into Ministry of Transportation of Ontario ... contract specifications breaches the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms," according to Bot Construction's lawyers.

And here's the clause that now has been inserted into MTO contracts: "The contractor shall not make any public comment, public ceremony or public announcement without the prior written approval of the owner," that being MTO. "The contractor shall refer all media inquiries related to the project to the owner," or to the MTO. It's a gag order—something that has never been in government contracts before.

"The new provision," this press release goes on to say, "in MTO contracts with road and bridge contractors could make it virtually impossible for contractors to alert the media, and therefore the public, to issues that may arise on projects worth millions of tax dollars."

This is the kind of action on the part of this government that is stifling economic activity in this province. It will literally shut down businesses. I don't know what it is that this government is trying to prove, but it certainly isn't in the best interests of the people of Ontario or of Ontario's economy.

1720

**Ms Horwath:** It's my pleasure to rise to make comments on the speech that was just given by the member from Algoma-Manitoulin. I have to say that, of course, what he took the time to do was to explain, from his perspective, some of the things that he thought were good things that this bill is going to do. I have to go back to the fact that, certainly from my perspective, the things he purports to be positive do not overshadow the things that I think are extremely negative. I really do believe

that the government's priorities are a bit out of whack, particularly when you look at a situation where you know we have increasing difficulty in many communities from one end of this province to the other. We have many broken promises that this government is simply not going to be able to fulfill. We keep hearing the government telling us that this promise is still going to be fulfilled, this promise or that promise, although it might take three years instead of any time soon.

**Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay):** Seven years. After the next election.

**Ms Horwath:** It might take seven years, after the next election, and those kinds of things.

Do you know what? The people of Ontario are quite disillusioned and quite disappointed with the lack of action by this government, and that action is not going to be in any way increased or in any way made quicker with things like Bill 149, which simply continues to give money back to those who have a lot of it and avoids doing some of the things—

*Interjection.*

**Ms Horwath:** Do you know what? Let's not even talk about some of the things like child care and second-stage housing; let's talk about things like hydro rate caps and auto insurance. Let's talk about other promises that were made. This particular \$1 billion, over the time frame between now and 2012, could have helped to alleviate some of that pain that every single person living in the province of Ontario who has a car or who has to deal with hydro bills is going to be experiencing. Quite frankly, it's a matter of priority. The government obviously has a priority to give money back to their wealthy friends.

**Mrs Donna H. Cansfield (Etobicoke Centre):** It's a pleasure to rise in support of the fall budget bill, Bill 149. I've listened to all of the speakers.

One of the main responsibilities of government is to live within its means, to live within the dollars it has to spend. There's no question it's difficult at times to make the decisions you have to make, but make them you must. I acknowledge there are philosophical differences. I can recall back when there was a project called the northern development project and the minister at the time, when it was requested that he go north, suggested that he might have to "put on his boots," demeaning, to say the least, in the respect that he wasn't giving the north in terms of the needs that it had.

I also recognize that philosophically there are people who are prepared to spend their way out of almost anything. The fact of the matter is that that previous government, the NDP, put us into a huge deficit that will, in fact, go for years on our children's children. There's no question.

Yes, you're right, we have to go forward and live within our means. It's part of our responsibility to do so and make the decisions, some of which are uncomfortable for others across the way. But instead of standing up and saying what the alternative options are, they stand up and yell at you. There's a huge difference; it's called

"debate." If you have a better alternative, you should present it and put it forward instead of yelling at somebody when you don't like what they've got. What purpose does that provide to anyone, especially for someone who's listening, to try to learn the differences within the debate? There is none.

I think it's really important that we recognize that when we talk about a fall budget, we have to acknowledge that there are decisions that are difficult. Previous governments made difficult decisions. But there is no question in my mind that the issues that are raised here within this bill provide significant incentives that are desperately needed in the north and have been for many years.

I'm delighted to be able to support this bill.

**Mr Dunlop:** Mr Speaker, I want you to know that I won't be supporting the bill. I can't, in all honesty, even begin to support something like this bill. It's having a very negative impact on the citizens of our province.

It's interesting to hear them all bragging about the north now, because that's actually the name of the bill. For some reason, one little part of it has something to do with the north, so they're going to name it after the north.

What will be really interesting in this House will be to compare the record of the previous government after its last four years in power and this government after four years in power to see exactly what they've accomplished for the north.

Let's start with highways. I can tell you that Highway 11 and Highway 69 have seen incredible improvements under the Mike Harris and Ernie Eves governments. I think there's only about 42 kilometres left of Highway 11 to complete, so it will be four-laned completely between Barrie and North Bay, plus there have been a series of road improvement projects on Highway 69/400, which has seen major improvements and many hundreds of millions of dollars spent to see that highway four-laned as well. Since this government came to power 14 months ago, I haven't seen a backhoe on the site, unless it was from a previous contract, or any construction taking place on either of those highways. I tell you, if there is anything at all that could help the north, it has been to make sure there's a good transportation system to the north for the economic development of the north. We're not seeing that; we haven't seen it to date. We've got all these fancy terms and strategies but no money and certainly no road improvement projects. That will tell the tale, and we'll be able to compare that after this government has been in power for four years.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member from Algoma-Manitoulin has two minutes.

**Mr Brown:** I appreciate the comments from the members from Oak Ridges, Hamilton East, Etobicoke Centre and Simcoe North. I am a little bit perplexed, not knowing why members would not want to support the northern Ontario grow bonds initiative, but I guess that's the choice the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democrats are going to make today, or when this comes to a vote. I think northerners will remember whether

those parties wanted to participate in the continued economic future of northern Ontario and the future of our young people. I think this bill will very much define whether members of those two parties believe in improving economic opportunities in northern Ontario. A vote against this would indicate that they just do not support northern Ontario initiatives.

The member for Simcoe North talked about highways. We're investing \$256 million in northern highways this year, which is a considerable amount of money, and we have a northern Ontario highway plan being developed so we can make sure that some of the deficiencies left to us over the past decade will be addressed.

I want to say to members that this bill is an attempt to bring financial responsibility back to this jurisdiction. Deficits are important. Fiscal responsibility is important. Without those two things, we cannot have a dynamic, energetic and buoyant economy. I would urge all members, not just for the sake of northern Ontario but for the sake of this province, to support this very, very important budget measure.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington):** I'm very pleased to raise some concerns with respect to Bill 149. As has been referenced by one of the government members, this is a rather large bill—209 pages. I've had a chance to read through a significant amount of it. There are several hundred new tax calculations, new tax modifications, new tax adjustments that generally won't become known to the public until their accountant advises them of it and the income tax forms are amended accordingly.

I want to raise a couple of issues about the bill itself, but I also want to raise some questions because the bill speaks to health services. It creates new taxing authorities for the employer health tax and for calculation of the health tax credit so that there are opportunities for people to receive less rebate from the provincial government for their medical expenses.

At the outset, I want to indicate that part of this Treasurer's budget includes a substantial increase for the Minister of Health to increase his administrative budget by about 7%. He's increasing his immediate administration inside the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Health, and yet he has told hospitals that collectively they have to live with a 4.3% increase. Hospitals like mine in Burlington, the Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital, are receiving 0.5%. They are in the process of identifying beds to be closed, they are identifying staff to be laid off and they are identifying procedures and operating procedures which they will no longer be providing. They've already shut down access to 20 chronic rehab beds in our community, and we are now operating with fewer beds than we had 15 years ago.

1730

The failure in this budget to make any adjustment to Ontario hospitals, and in particular that handful of hospitals that received less than a 4% increase, of which Joseph Brant was one of the worst examples of the fiscal

kind of starvation diet budget—let me correct that: the worst example of the starvation budget which the Minister of Health has provided. Care will be compromised in those communities, so it's of little comfort to many Ontarians, as Bill 149 passes, that it contains within it the loss of some tax credits and the increases to some taxes in our province that compound even further their ability to cope with their household as well as their health expenses.

I say they have a problem coping with their health care expenses because this is the government that delisted chiropractic, that said it has no value to medical needs, that it's not a priority health service in this province, and yet the evidence is compelling that chiropractic service provides so much more than just relief. It provides a medical condition that allows the public to be more accessible, to be more ambulatory, to do more of their daily chores—physiotherapy as well, and eye care services, which have been cut.

If I were to look inside this bill through the eyes of a senior citizen, on the one hand they may be quite pleased that the government has increased the seniors' property tax credit by \$125. But by the same token, this government by its second budget has eliminated the seniors' property tax credit, which was the natural extension of the previous government's commitment to freeze property taxes, which we did for seniors; our government's commitment to reduce the impact of education property taxes, which were the fastest-rising taxes seniors had to cope with—this was the extension of our promise to move toward removing the education property tax because it is a wealth tax, and seniors are house-rich and income-poor, unable to afford to pay for their tax increases.

For the government to suggest that \$125 a year is in some way going to offset the \$450 to—in my riding the average was much higher than \$450. I profess, or confess, that there are more citizens in my community who are living above the poverty line than in some other members' in this House, so their property tax rebate under the education property tax rebate, which the Liberals cancelled, would have been closer to \$1,000. That \$1,000 would be rather important, whether you are renting an apartment or paying property taxes, very important to people who today are going to pay 20% more on their hydro bills as a result of this government breaking its promise to freeze rates. Particularly, it was done to protect vulnerable persons on fixed incomes, like the disabled, seniors and the poor, who can't cope with double-digit increases for their hydro bills. These are just a few of the kinds of changes the government has brought in that adversely affect seniors.

We have another example here with this sleight of hand that occurred with the removal of the vehicle tax credit, which a very large number of seniors did utilize as a means of allowing them to afford a replacement vehicle so they could transport a loved one who is disabled. I find it passing strange that the government trumpeted its announcement of its expansion, from \$10 million to \$20

million, of the home and vehicle modification program for the most severely disabled individuals in the province but stole the money out of this program so that they netted out on the balance sheet. It wasn't new money from the government; it was money they shifted by cancelling this program in order to transfer it to the other program.

If you check with the people at the March of Dimes, they'll tell you that they welcome the new money. But there's no way they can get \$20 million out the door when they could barely get \$10 million out last year. They don't have the infrastructure to double that program. What it does is compromise a whole series of seniors, particularly women who are in the care of a frail elderly or disabled spouse, especially since generally the male spouse is the predominant breadwinner and has the higher income and the woman has access to far less money, so this kind of tax rebate was very, very important.

When this was cancelled, it was indefensible and quite immoral for the government to continue advertising on their Web site for almost six months that people were eligible to go and buy cars and get the tax rebate. As I mentioned to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services, that is an illegal act in the province of Ontario. One of the most extreme violations of consumer protection in this province is to induce people to buy on the promise of a rebate when it doesn't exist. Fines in the hundreds of thousands of dollars are appropriate in such a case, and the government just turned a blind eye to the whole episode. I want to acknowledge my colleague Mr Prue, from Beaches-East York, who, along with myself, but predominantly himself, raised this issue with the minister. There are hundreds and hundreds of seniors and others who didn't benefit.

There are amendments to the Income Tax Act that are going to change the calculation for the medical expenses credit, which will adversely affect people in this province. There's the elimination of the workplace child care tax credit in this bill, which is not a positive step forward.

There is harmonization with the federal government on tax collection on fees and other charges. On one hand, the government is out because it couldn't get the money for its Best Start child care program in this province, so its response was to say to the federal government, "We're not getting our fair share." Well, I warn the government to be very careful about getting in bed with the federal government, which sees Ontario as the goose that keeps laying the golden eggs to keep our confederation together. Nowhere will that hurt us more than with harmonized tax policies between Ottawa and Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments?

**Mr Phil McNeely (Ottawa-Orléans):** I'm pleased today to rise in support of Bill 149. I believe these latest budget measures are going to be key in encouraging economic strength and diversity in Ontario. I'm especially interested in the issue of commercialization of some of our research, especially as it relates to my own riding of Ottawa-Orléans. Not far away, we have the

National Research Council, the Ottawa Health Research Institute and the Life Sciences Council, and this legislation is certainly going to assist us in promoting our research and trying to get it commercialized, where the real jobs are. This is something extremely important that we go ahead with.

Through the Ontario commercialization investment fund, Bill 149 will provide \$36 million to leverage up to \$120 million in additional research grants. This is going to be extremely important. This is the seed money we need to get the jobs out of the excellent research that's being done locally. We're not doing a good enough job of it, and this government is committed to making sure that the research is turned into jobs that Canadians, Ontarians and Ottawans need.

Having been in business for many years, I also support the elimination of the capital tax by 2012. This is not being done very quickly, but it's very important legislation that is going to be positive for corporations so that we have stronger corporations, ones that want to build up their asset value. By eliminating this tax, we're going to grow the economy more. This is extremely important.

I think this bill has introduced a lot of fiscally sound measures that are going to have a positive impact on growth and diversification, on job creation, on investor confidence and on other areas of our economy. I give it my strong support.

**1740**

**Mr Dunlop:** I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the member for Burlington for an excellent speech. He wanted to get a full 20 minutes in today. Unfortunately, the time ran out so he couldn't get that time in. But he brings some extremely good points forward.

What he didn't get involved with in his comments was the seniors' tax credit. It's almost hilarious to listen to the government bring this forward now. It's sort of a pittance of the law that was in place at the time of the election last year, which they repealed as soon as they got elected, which helped the senior citizens in Ontario. We had it in place for exactly the reason you're saying today you brought it forward for, to help them out, and it was law. You repealed that. It helped more people with more money. I believe your amount is \$125 million; we would have helped out with \$450 million. That would have been the benefit to the taxpayers of Ontario.

Mr Jackson didn't get an opportunity today to even mention that. He's obviously someone—as a former minister in that particular department—who knows a lot about the issues surrounding seniors. I know he has his own radio talk show where seniors call in and he explains some of the things the government is doing and some of the ways to try to overcome this government. I compliment him for that. He's also the minister who brought forward the 20,000 new long-term-care beds in Ontario that this government—which is now officially opening some of them—is actually taking credit for; for beds that Mr Jackson announced and we funded. That's pretty pathetic, but that's the bottom line. I've even seen that in the budget. I think you're taking credit for 3,700

beds that would open this year, and, of course, we allowed those tenders and RFPs to take place.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on Mr Jackson's great speech.

**Ms Horwath:** It's my pleasure to make some comments on the speech by the member for Burlington. I thought he gave an excellent overview of what Bill 149 is not about. I think he laid it out in the order of things that are near and dear to his heart. He talked about how Bill 149 is not about improving our health care system, it's not about helping out our hospitals, it's not about helping out our seniors, it's not about dealing with some of the things that, in fact, I raised myself—he didn't raise them—things like domestic violence, child poverty and a proper, fully funded and immediately implemented model for child care that would be supported by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, for example. It's not about affordable housing or film industry tax credits.

The member for Burlington was actually quite clear in his disappointment that the government has put together this particular bill and not addressed some of the major issues that are on the minds of the people of Ontario. In fact, as we have heard over and over again, it is about the government increasing administrative budgets, for example, for some of the ministers; it is about breaking promises to the people of Ontario; it is about giving gifts to big banks and big insurance corporations, to the detriment of all of the rest of us; and it is about an omnibus bill that covers off over 40 statutes with over 250 amendments. It is about a big, huge attempt at house-keeping while at the same time trying to persuade the public that they're actually doing things. The problem is, they're not doing the things they promised to do, and they're doing all kinds of things that nobody knew they were going to do. That, in the crux of it, is the problem with Bill 149 and why we'll certainly not be supporting it.

**Mr Brown:** I appreciate the comments from the member for Burlington, and I just want to take a few seconds to talk about eliminating the PST rebate for modified vehicles and redirecting the funding. That's exactly what's happened.

**Mr Jackson:** You're admitting it was a trade-off?

**Mr Brown:** Sure. Absolutely.

Ontario is redirecting the funding that provided retail sales tax rebates on vehicles purchased for persons with permanent disabilities to a program that gives priority—and I want the member from Burlington to talk about this—to those people with disabilities. People with the most need get the money.

Some \$8 million is being redirected from the PST program, plus an additional \$2 million is being provided, to increase funding for the home and vehicle modification program to \$10 million annually. That is more than four times the previous year's funding.

The home and vehicle modification program is income-tested and provides grants of up to \$15,000 per home or vehicle modification to people with physical disabilities. Unlike the previous RST rebate, the home

and vehicle modification program gives priority to applicants who are most in need, and helps them to stay in their homes.

I'm sure the member for Burlington understands that, that there are finite resources within government, and that it is a government's responsibility to see that the money given to people with disabilities goes to those people who are most in need. I would appreciate it if he addresses that in his response.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The member for Burlington, two minutes to respond.

**Mr Jackson:** There so much missing in Bill 149, and there are a few things in there that still need commenting on.

The cancelling of the Ontario home ownership savings plan: They're actually going to penalize people, force them to buy a home and clear out their account, or else they have to pay tax on everything. That's like putting a gun to people's heads. What's the principle of a savings plan for young people if now you're going to turn on them and say, "If you don't empty your bank account right away, you're going to pay tax on it"?

I'm concerned that there are provisions in here to give municipalities the right to increase taxes for hydro rights-of-way. So they get to do is tax more; then the local utility, owned by the municipality, gets to charge more for its hydro, and they pass it on through. There is no limit to the number of innovative ways this government keeps coming up with to charge more on the hydro bill, and it's right in Bill 149.

The elimination of the workplace child care tax credit: What is wrong with child care in large accommodations? We have one here at Queen's Park. It's a great idea. It works.

I've talked about harmonizing, the amendments to the Municipal Act.

There's one major disappointment in this bill, and I'm angry about it. That is the failure of this government to deal in Bill 149 with the problems associated with the over 4,000 Stelco pensioners and the situation they find themselves in. Many of them are constituents in my riding and the area. The fact of the matter is that there is a pension shortfall, according to actuaries, of \$861 million. Nothing in this legislation, nothing in this bill, does anything to prop up, to support, to strengthen, to encourage the pension benefits guarantee fund. It took a previous Conservative government to find the funds and to make the commitment to save Algoma so that it could compete in the global market.

This government's done nothing. Every company that is competing with Stelco, every company that is trying to do a takeover bid was able to eliminate its pension responsibilities, and they won't do one thing to help Stelco in this province.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Further debate.

**Mr Bisson:** I'm so glad to be here with you. I'd be so much happier if I could do this sitting in my seat, but the rules of this House don't allow me. So if I do this, it's because I've got a sore foot.



I want to speak to a couple of parts in this bill, and I also want to relate it to an announcement the Premier made in the riding up in northern Ontario on the weekend. Part of this bill deals with some of the things the government announced in northern Ontario on Thursday, and one of those things was the grow bonds.

I just want to put on the record—because I was talking to the media and other people about this in the riding when it was announced—that I thought the big news on Thursday, quite frankly, was the heritage fund. I thought, for the government to finally accept the argument that we've been making for a long time, which is the heritage fund—

**Mr Brown:** The guys who took \$60 million out of it?

**Mr Bisson:** I'm giving you some credit, and you're going to yell at me? Come on, Mike.

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I thought the issue that made some sense was the government's decision to reverse the current policy on the northern heritage fund, to move it from being a capital infrastructure program back to what it was originally designed for: an economic development program for northern Ontario. I think that was really the big news on Friday.

The other stuff the government announced by way of the Premier, some of it which is contained in this bill, the grow bonds and the northern Ontario strategy—I forget what you called it—are really a bit of a rehash of things that already exist out there.

For example, grow bonds: If you would remember, similar mechanisms were put in place by various governments over the past number of years. Are they a bad thing? Of course not; they're not a bad thing. I wouldn't vote and say, "This is a terrible thing and I can't support it." It is obviously going to have some benefit. But the basic issue for northern Ontario is, if you're asking northerners to invest in grow bonds so you can take that money and reinvest it in northern Ontario businesses, there is a pretty small pool of capital to go after. That's the basic problem we have in northern Ontario.

I look at most of the communities where grow bonds would be where we would need money. For example, if you went to the smaller communities like Mattice, Opatatika and places like that, it would be pretty difficult to raise the kind of money you want within those communities because there isn't the money there to be able to raise it so you can lend it out.

The government, mind you, is saying that this will be a pan-northern Ontario bond, and people who live in Thunder Bay, Timmins or Sudbury can invest in those bonds and that money can be lent out. I think time will tell. Was it a great announcement? It was an announcement; let's just put it at that. I don't think, at the end of the day, that that's going to have the positive impact the changes to the criteria of the heritage fund are going to have.

We have stood in this House time and time again—myself, Howard Hampton, Shelley Martel, and Tony Martin before that—when the previous government

changed the criteria of the heritage fund from what was pure economic development, where we used to use the fund to do loan guarantees and assistance to private entrepreneurs to be able to invest in businesses in northern Ontario, to where the government said, "We will no longer do that," because the government's philosophy of the day, under the Tories, was that you should never allow businesses to borrow money from the government.

I think that's nuts. If you look at any modern European or North American economy, governments have been very busy and very proactive in lending money to businesses where the private sector has not been able to do so. One only needs to take a look at Ford; look at the investment this government and previous governments, and our government, have made in Ford, GM and Chrysler over the past 15, 20 years. They're pretty humongous. I look at the investments governments have made in Algoma Steel, Spruce Falls Pulp and Paper, and the list goes on. Those have been very strategic investments for the province of Ontario in order to safeguard jobs that are currently there and to help those particular sectors expand.

If government had not been as proactive in the auto sector as it has been over the past 30 or 40 years, the auto sector would not be what it is today. Can you imagine the auto sector today if the government had taken this position, both federally and provincially: "We're not going to get involved. We're not going to lend any money to these corporations. We're not going to provide them with the type of support they need to be able to be competitive"? The auto sector as we know it today wouldn't be happening.

That's why I'm saying to the government—not contained in this bill but somewhat related; the government announced on Friday that they are going to move to change the criteria of the northern Ontario heritage fund—here today as a New Democrat that we support that, we think that's a step in the right direction and we applaud it, quite frankly. However, it had better be a complete return to the criteria. I don't want to see that we in northern Ontario, those businesses out there looking for guarantees on loans, have to compete with money going off to municipal infrastructure. Municipal infrastructure should be funded by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment and all those other ministries that are better suited, in my view, to deal with that. The heritage fund, the full \$60 million, should be used for economic development.

I know, as the members from northern Ontario know—my good friends from Algoma and Thunder Bay—Atikokan, I think it is, right?

**Mr Gravelle:** Superior North.

**Mr Bisson:** Superior North; I'm sorry.

We all understand quite well that there is a lot of economic opportunity in northern Ontario. The difficulty is in trying to get the banks to lend you the money. How many entrepreneurs have we dealt with who are trying to get businesses off the ground, and how many businesses

are currently running that are trying to do expansions or renovations to their plants, and when they go to the bank, are not able to borrow the money? Banks have become very restrictive when it comes to lending money in northern Ontario.

If the government is going to take the full \$60 million and say, "This is for loan guarantees; we're going to take that money in order to provide for loan guarantees and what we used to do before," I think that is a step in the right direction. I want to tell you that if you do that, you'll have the support of our caucus.

I want to come back very quickly to the other initiative that was announced on Friday, which I thought was much ado about nothing. It's not that it's a bad thing; I forget what you call it. It's the initiative to support tourism.

**Mr Gravelle:** Go North.

**Mr Bisson:** They have a Go North program. I think it's \$18 million—I'm just looking a nod. Anyway, on Friday the government announced, through the Premier, that they've got this Go North initiative. They're going to make \$18 million available to tourist outfitters and different people in the tourism industry to market their tourist destinations across North America and around the world. Is that a bad thing? Of course not. But is that something new? No. We've been doing that for years. For the government to say, all of a sudden, "We've come up with a bright idea, and we're revamping how business is done in northern Ontario," I think, is a bit beyond the pale. Is it a bad thing? No. But every government has done that in the past. I was a member of the NDP government that had similar programs. Even the Conservatives had programs to assist northern businesses to attract tourism opportunities and tourists into their part of northern Ontario. Again, is it bad? The answer is no. But it's a little bit of much ado about nothing.

If there was one piece of news that came out on Friday that has the potential for being something very positive, it is the announcement about the heritage fund. I repeat: If the full \$60 million is put into economic development, you will have our support and not a question about it. We think that needs to be done. If you start to weasel and start saying, "Well, we're only going to use \$10 million or \$20 million for economic development and the other \$40 million or \$50 million is going to be used for municipal infrastructure," the answer is no. We need real help in northern Ontario. The real help we can give is through the heritage fund, and I look forward to the government moving forward on that.

With the couple of minutes I have left, I want to say that I had the opportunity again this weekend, as we all

do, to travel across my riding. For some of us, it's a little bit more arduous than others. I probably did about 2,000 kilometres this weekend, driving to Hearst, Kapuskasing and Mattice. I just want to say that there is a real expectation on the part of northerners. They really do want to engage with the provincial and federal governments to become real partners in how we're able to grow the economy of northern Ontario. We're looking for this government to get beyond the platitudes of making announcements and sitting down with us and doing the work that needs to be done.

There are real opportunities in mining. In fact, Charlie Angus, my federal counterpart, and I met last Monday with Kirkland Lake Gold. A mine they said would never reopen, the former Macassa mine, now has about 500 people working there between both the underground and the surface operations. Do you know what their problem is? They can't find qualified miners. We haven't seen that in northern Ontario in last 10 or 12 years. Right now, if they could hire 60 qualified miners, they could take them tomorrow. We met with both Collège Boréal, the northern college, and Kirkland Lake Gold, last Monday, to talk about how we develop some training initiatives that are able to support the mining industry to help do some of the pre-qualification work that needs to be done to get people into mining.

Talking to people up at Dumas Construction, J.S. Redpath, Cementation and a whole bunch of others, it's the same story in mining across northern Ontario: There is a real lack of qualified miners and qualified people to work in the mines, and there is a real shortage of skilled trades and skilled labour. If we're going to do something to assist northern Ontario, the government has also got to respond with us at the community college level on how we are able to develop programs to assist industry to do the type of training we've got to do to support needs within industry. Industry can't do it on its own. We all know it's a pretty competitive environment out there, both in forestry and in mining. We need to make sure the government is at the table working with us in order to move on some of those very important training issue.

I look forward to working on these issues with the government and others, and I hope this government is going to do more than just talk and actually take some action on some of the things we're talking about.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6 of the clock, or in very close proximity thereto, this House is adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

*The House adjourned at 1759.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

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Brownell, Jim (L)	Stormont-Dundas- Charlottenburgh	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
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<b>Caplan, Hon / L'hon David</b> (L)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint
<b>Chambers, Hon / L'hon Mary Anne V.</b> (L)	Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	Deputy Opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Churley, Marilyn (ND)	Toronto-Danforth	Deputy New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton-Lawrence	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Finances
<b>Cordiano, Hon / L'hon Joseph</b> (L)	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Craitor, Kim (L)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce</b> (L)	Essex	Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Curling, Hon / L'hon Alvin</b> (L)	Scarborough-Rouge River	Speaker / Président

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<b>Dombrowsky, Hon / L'hon Leona (L)</b>	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Duguid, Brad (L)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Urban) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Secteur urbain)
<b>Duncan, Hon / L'hon Dwight (L)</b>	Windsor-St Clair	Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Eves, Ernie (PC)	Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey	
Flaherty, Jim (PC)	Whitby-Ajax	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Oakville	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Fonseca, Peter (L)	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Gerretsen, Hon / L'hon John (L)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Gravelle, Michael (L)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / Thunder Bay-Superior-Nord	
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora-Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham-Kent Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Erie-Lincoln	
Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Burlington	
Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	
<b>Kennedy, Hon / L'hon Gerard (L)</b>	Parkdale-High Park	Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation
Klees, Frank (PC)	Oak Ridges	
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L)	Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for democratic renewal / adjoint parlementaire au ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
<b>Kwinter, Hon / L'hon Monte (L)</b>	York Centre / York-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry-Prescott-Russell	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Transports
Leal, Jeff (L)	Peterborough	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	Chief government whip / whip en chef du gouvernement
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Marsales, Judy (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	
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Matthews, Deborah (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Mauro, Bill (L)	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
<b>McGuinty, Hon / L'hon Dalton</b> (L)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier and President of the Executive Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
McMeekin, Ted (L)	Ancaster-Dundas- Flamborough-Aldershot	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Business Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
McNeely, Phil (L)	Ottawa-Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon / L'hon Madeleine</b> (L)	Ottawa-Vanier	Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound-Muskoka	Deputy opposition House leader / leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Milloy, John (L)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
Mitchell, Carol (L)	Huron-Bruce	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture and Food / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)	Stoney Creek	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Culture / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Culture
Munro, Julia (PC)	York North / York-Nord	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (L)	Sault Ste Marie	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Éducation
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Parsons, Ernie (L)	Prince Edward-Hastings	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services (Disabilities) / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires (Personnes handicapées)
Patten, Richard (L)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade (innovation) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce (Innovation)
<b>Peters, Hon / L'hon Steve</b> (L)	Elgin-Middlesex-London	Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation
Peterson, Tim (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs
<b>Phillips, Hon / L'hon Gerry</b> (L)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (ND)	Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
<b>Pupatello, Hon / L'hon Sandra</b> (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Racco, Mario G. (L)	Thornhill	
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London-Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
<b>Ramsay, Hon / L'hon David</b> (L)	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds-Grenville	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	

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Sandals, Liz (L)	Guelph-Wellington	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Scott, Laurie (PC) Sergio, Mario (L)	Haliburton-Victoria-Brock York West / York-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for seniors / adjoint parlementaire au ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Smith, Monique M. (L)	Nipissing	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Smitherman, Hon / L'hon George</b> (L)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
<b>Sorbara, Hon / L'hon Greg</b> (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Lanark-Carleton	
<b>Takhar, Hon / L'hon Harinder S.</b> (L)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
<b>Tascona, Joseph N.</b> (PC)	Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Van Bommel, Maria (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Rural) / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Secteur rural)
<b>Watson, Hon / L'hon Jim</b> (L)	Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises
Wilkinson, John (L)	Perth-Middlesex	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Environnement
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe-Grey	
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	
Wong, Tony C. (L)	Markham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de l'Éducation
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Zimmer, David (L)	Willowdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Présidente: Julia Munro  
Laurel C. Broten, Jim Flaherty, Shelley Martel,  
Bill Mauro, Julia Munro, Richard Patten,  
Liz Sandals, Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer  
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Regulations and private bills /  
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Présidente: Marilyn Churley  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Tony C. Wong  
Gilles Bisson, Marilyn Churley, Jeff Leal,  
Gerry Martiniuk, Bill Murdoch, Tim Peterson,  
Khalil Ramal, Maria Van Bommel, Tony C. Wong  
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Social Policy / Politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Jeff Leal  
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Khalil Ramal  
Ted Arnott, Ted Chudleigh, Kim Craiton,  
Peter Fonseca, Jeff Leal, Rosario Marchese,  
Ted McMeekin, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne  
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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