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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 17 October 2005

Lundi 17 octobre 2005

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 17 October 2005

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 17 octobre 2005

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

VETERANS

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I rise in the House today to pay tribute, in this international Year of the Veteran, and thank veterans for their courage and determination. It's also my privilege to congratulate Branch 178 of the Royal Canadian Legion in Bowmanville for 75 years of service. I rise because paying tribute to Branch 178 of the Royal Canadian Legion in Bowmanville is paying tribute to my community and the members who make it strong. On Saturday, October 1, the Legion hosted a special evening to celebrate this anniversary. One of the highlights was paying tribute to the many veterans who have been Legion members for 60 years. I would recognize Rae Abernethy, Don Brooks, Art Brooks, Eric Andrews, Floyd Beckett, Bill Colville, Art Hooper, Ian Hovey, William Kilpatrick, Harvey Jones, Michael Owchar, Don Parker, Ken Palmer, George Bellman, Robert Lockhart and the late Clarence Oke.

Today's Legion continues the important work of helping veterans and their families. The Legion ensures that our community remembers and honours the sacrifice of those who served Canada at war. Branch 178 has also made our community a stronger place, with stronger values that you can count on. This includes support for the sea cadet program through the Navy League, sponsoring sports activities, donating high school scholarships for our youth and sponsoring our pipe band.

I'm proud to stand and respect members of the Legion, our veterans, especially during this Year of the Veteran.

THAMES VALLEY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe): I learned last week that the Thames Valley District School Board will save \$2.7 million a year on their utility bill. The board has found its savings by focusing on about 10 million square feet of space in 197 board buildings and 229 portables across the school district.

Every year, the Thames Valley District School Board will achieve savings in utility areas such as natural gas, water systems and electricity. Some examples of savings: more than \$159,000 saved in replaced boilers at 30 schools; more than \$132,000 saved in upgrades to caulking,

weather stripping in many different schools; over \$103,000 saved in water system improvements at 35 schools; \$314,000 saved in upgrades—lighting, ventilation, sensors—for 229 portables.

We know that students have a much better chance at success when they learn in schools that are clean, safe and in good repair. The McGuinty government's Good Places to Learn plan is strengthening our province by strengthening the education of our children. The savings on energy costs in Thames Valley means that there will be more resources for Thames Valley classrooms. I congratulate Thames Valley District School Board on its energy savings.

CITIZENSHIP WEEK

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): I'm pleased to rise today to mark Citizenship Week in Ontario as we celebrate our diversity and the freedoms and privileges that we enjoy in this great province.

As an immigrant myself, I am well aware of the challenges that are faced daily by the 125,000 people each year who adopt Ontario as their home. We must ensure that those coming to Ontario have the opportunity to put their qualifications to work so that they can support their families and make a positive contribution to our communities.

This government wants us to believe that a federal-provincial agreement to increase funding for immigration services is imminent. Through two provincial and three federal ministers, there is still no formal agreement and no additional funds. Our settlement agencies desperately need increased funding to provide services for newcomers.

As the Legislature marks Citizenship Week, let me remind and renew John Tory's challenge to the Premier in this House last week, which was to increase funding to the South Asian earthquake relief efforts beyond the \$1-million commitment and to match private donations, thereby demonstrating in a very practical way that this government recognizes and is prepared to do something to support our citizens and those citizens abroad. I call on the Legislature and I call on this government to do the right thing: Increase funding to the South Asian relief effort.

RIDING OF ANCASTER-DUNDAS- FLAMBOROUGH-ALDERSHOT

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Aldershot): With all the talk about democratic

renewal, allow me to share some insights from our recent ADFA constituency council. The council is a non-partisan group of 60 local community champions. Listening carefully to their advice is always refreshing.

Here are some insights from our most recent meeting:

There is an appreciation that stability and civility have been returned to our education system. The new emphasis on local health care decision-making was applauded. The greenbelt initiative has been well received. One caution, however: We must find ways to bring added value to our agricultural stakeholders. The group recommends responding to the looming energy crisis with a more aggressive conservation program, smart meters and a greater emphasis on public transit. Uploading social services from municipalities to the province was seen as a priority. Finally, amalgamation isn't working. The constituency council would like to see a full fiscal and social audit of the impact of amalgamation, something our mayor promised in his last election campaign.

I believe that while democratic reform in this place is important and necessary, an even more important opportunity for real reform exists at the local riding level. I deeply value the efforts of the difference-makers in my community who are prepared to dare and share and care with each other and with their provincial member to build the stronger, healthier, more caring and sustainable communities we all desire.

WEST LINCOLN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie–Lincoln): As members of the chamber know, west Niagara is in need of a new hospital. There are great, talented, hard-working people at the West Lincoln Memorial Hospital in Grimsby. They and the hospital have an excellent reputation. I know that the minister across is very well aware of that. But they work in a tired, old building in need of renewal in a community that is seeing an aging population grow in numbers and many young families moving to the area.

The community has already raised \$12.9 million for the new West Lincoln Memorial Hospital. Over the summer, I have written to both the Minister of Health and the Premier asking for a firm commitment to this hospital and for a clear outline of what the funding formula will be. As of yet, we have not had a satisfactory answer to those inquiries. If there were a clear funding formula in place based on need, local fundraising and the quality of the plan, we would be very confident of our hospital moving forward expeditiously. However, unfortunately, instead it is starting to look like the hospital capital process is more about politics and less about building the hospitals that we need.

I think we deserve the answers to these simple questions, and we deserve these answers promptly: Will the McGuinty government fund the new West Lincoln Memorial Hospital; what will the split be between the local and provincial fundraising; and when will the new West Lincoln Memorial Hospital be opening to serve their community?

1340

POVERTY

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth): Today is the UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and the National Day of Action to End Child Poverty in Canada. This day arrives on the heels of yet another report detailing the growing disparity and inequity within this city.

The Toronto Community Foundation released its annual report card, *Vital Signs*, on how this city is faring. It repeated what it has been saying for several years: Poverty is prevalent and is growing. But while the gap between the poorest and the richest families' incomes continues to rise, the McGuinty Liberals have not yet moved on improving income assistance programs to meet people's most basic needs, and they continue to take funds away from the poorest families with its odious clawback of the national child benefit supplement, money that would prevent parents from having to choose between paying the rent and feeding the kids.

Sue Cox, executive director of the Daily Bread Food Bank, a position formerly held by the current Minister of Education, was quoted in the *Toronto Star* this weekend as saying that she "has never seen the food bank network in the Greater Toronto Area as strained as it is now."

The *Vital Signs* report echoed the United Way report of a few years ago, *Poverty by Postal Code*. The numbers show that the areas of concentrated poverty in Toronto have risen from 30 in 1980 to 120 in 2001. Among those most impacted are our young people. There has been a 100% increase in the number of children living in high-poverty neighbourhoods and a 60% increase in the number of youth living in higher-poverty neighbourhoods.

This is not good enough.

TTC SAFETY

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I rise today on behalf of all of us to offer sympathies and get-well wishes to a dedicated TTC employee who was the victim of a shooting this past Saturday night while on duty in the northeast area of the city of Toronto.

It is an unfortunate fact that transit operators have to be subjected to daily confrontations, verbal abuse and, at rare times, violence. All TTC operators are to be commended for their strong abilities in dealing with dangerous situations.

This government is tough on crime and the causes of crime in Toronto and across this province. Just recently, our government's Mandatory Gunshot Wounds Reporting Act came into effect. It requires hospitals to report gunshot or other wounds to the police. We are the first province in Canada to pass such legislation. Furthermore, our government will be working with communities, including the city of Toronto, to hire 1,000 more police officers across the province, 500 of which will be deployed to combat guns, gangs, youth crime and other

priority areas. As well, our government is taking positive steps to prevent crime in the community with the safer communities grant and the community-use-of-schools program. We are also making communities safer by getting offenders in tough, structured, community-based work programs instead of spending the weekend watching television.

Again I would like to extend our sympathy and best wishes to the bus driver, his family and his extended family at the TTC. We have every confidence that the Toronto Police Service will find the suspects and ensure that our communities remain safe.

SCHIZOPHRENIA

Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale): I am pleased to rise today to acknowledge that October is Schizophrenia Awareness Month, and to applaud the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario for its efforts to draw much-needed attention to this increasingly serious illness which affects the lives of so many Ontarians.

Schizophrenia affects one in 100 people in Ontario; that's over 120,000 people. It affects both youth and adults alike and is often misunderstood or stigmatized as being weird or unusual. The reality is that schizophrenia can be treated and its impact significantly lessened with proper medication and behavioural therapy.

As a family physician turned politician and as a strong advocate of educating others on mental health issues, I know first-hand the importance of raising awareness on schizophrenia. Education alone makes early detection possible. Together, we can all work to eliminate the stigma attached to this illness.

I would like to commend the efforts of the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario for helping to make this illness better understood and treated both within the medical community and in the public. I want to acknowledge some of the members of the Schizophrenia Society of Ontario, who have joined us here today in the east lobby.

GEORGE HISLOP

Ms. Kathleen O. Wynne (Don Valley West): I rise today to honour the death of a hero and icon of the gay community in Canada, George Hislop, who died just over a week ago, on October 8, at the age of 78.

George Hislop was a role model, demonstrating to countless young gay men how to live openly without shame and without fear. He always said, "I never came out of the closet because I was never in it."

George was an actor in his early days who became an activist later, almost by accident, because of the homophobic "nonsense," as he called it. He said, "I couldn't stand it any more. But then you speak up, attract attention and it snowballs from there."

He led the first gay protest on the steps of the House of Commons in 1971. Around the same time he helped organize Toronto's first Gay Day, a gaggle of brave souls

which has grown into the huge annual Gay Pride celebration. Thirty-four years later, Hislop was named the grand marshal of the Pride Parade.

In 1980, he was the first openly gay candidate to run for municipal office in Toronto, running for city council. When George's partner of nearly 28 years, Ron Shearer, died in 1986, George fought to access survivor benefits from the Canada pension plan. He finally declared victory in November of 2004, and in August he received his first cheque from the federal government.

Strong, honest, open men and politicians like Toronto city councillor Kyle Rae and our own Minister of Health, George Smitherman, can be models for a younger generation at least in some part because George Hislop went before them. I understand from George Smitherman that the very first gay bar he ever went to was owned by George Hislop.

George Hislop was a hero in the gay and lesbian community. He was a man who made Canada a safer, more tolerant place. I am privileged to ask all members to join me in honouring the life of George Robert Hislop for the brave hero that he was.

VISITORS

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In the members' gallery today I would like to introduce Diane Austin, who is the executive director of Community Living Peterborough, and four individuals who are supported by Community Living Peterborough: Lynda Nairn, Barb Anderson, Gord Herd and Graham Sheldon. I want to welcome them to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. That of course is not a point of order, but welcome.

RESIGNATION OF MEMBER FOR SCARBOROUGH–ROUGE RIVER

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I beg to inform the House that during the adjournment a vacancy has occurred in the membership of the House by the reason of the resignation of Alvin Curling as member for the electoral district of Scarborough–Rouge River, effective August 19, 2005. Accordingly, my warrant has been issued to the Chief Election Officer for the issue of a writ for a by-election.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I beg the indulgence of the House to allow the pages to assemble for their introduction.

I would ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving in the second session of the 38th Parliament: Trevor Appleby from Halton, Joyce Berkers from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Mandy Min Che from St. Paul's, Alexandra Da Silva from Mississauga East, Loreena Dobson from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Jasmine Haemel from Peterborough, Graeme Kennedy from Don Valley East,

Michael Kirkland from Sarnia–Lambton, Kiki Kirkpatrick from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, Michelle Lauzon from Eglinton–Lawrence, Austin MacDonald from London West, Frances Maranger from Perth–Middlesex, Andrew McMahon from Elgin–Middlesex–London, Nina Patti from Toronto Centre–Rosedale, Kerby Reed Balen from Simcoe North, Anika Roberts from Beaches–East York, Adam Rupani from Nepean–Carleton, Jeffrey Skinner from Markham, and Charlie Tan from Mississauga West. Welcome.

Applause.

1350

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
AND HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT
AMENDMENT ACT (HASTINGS
AND PRINCE EDWARD REGIMENT
MEMORIAL HIGHWAY), 2005

LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DES VOIES
PUBLIQUES ET DES TRANSPORTS EN
COMMUN (ROUTE COMMÉMORATIVE
HASTINGS AND PRINCE EDWARD
REGIMENT)

Mr. Parsons moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to Amend the Public Transportation and Highway Improvement Act to name a portion of Highway 62 and Highway 33 the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment Memorial Highway / *Projet de loi 5, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement des voies publiques et des transports en commun pour nommer une section des routes 62 et 33 route commémorative Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment.*

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the member have a brief statement?

Mr. Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward–Hastings): We enjoy a level of freedom in this country that is the envy of the rest of the world. I'm sure I can speak on behalf of every member in this House when I say that we are very conscious of the price that has been paid for that freedom—a horrible price by some individuals and families.

The Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment, affectionately known as the Hasty P's, is a regiment that dates back to 1800. The modern regiment won tremendous battle honours in Italy, Sicily and Greece during World War II.

I would like to see this highway named so that we can remember, each and every time, as we drive on this highway, the price that was paid for our freedom. Our veterans are leaving us far too soon and in far too large numbers. This is an opportunity for the young people of this province and of this country to be reminded every

day of the price that has been paid to ensure that we enjoy the freedom and quality of life that we do in this province.

FRED GLOGER TENANT PROTECTION
AMENDMENT ACT

(VITAL SERVICES), 2005

LOI FRED GLOGER DE 2005

MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION
DES LOCATAIRES
(SERVICES ESSENTIELS)

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act, in memory of Fred Gloger, to amend the Tenant Protection Act, 1997 in respect of vital services / *Projet de loi 6, Loi à la mémoire de Fred Gloger modifiant la Loi sur la protection des locataires à l'égard des services essentiels.*

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Does the member have a brief statement?

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): This bill replaces my former bill, Bill 170, which died along with a number of other important bills when the McGuinty government prorogued the House. My bill amends the Tenant Protection Act, 1997, to ensure that tenants who pay for their utilities through their rent don't have their vital services, like hydro, gas or water, disconnected because their landlord refuses to pay the bill.

I have a lot more detail around that, but I think now is the time that this bill needs to be passed. We're going into the cold winter months, and the tenants of Ontario deserve to be protected by basic legislation, because they've already paid their utilities in their rent and they need to make sure that those utilities are kept on during these cold upcoming months.

BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I have an announcement. I am going to announce the latest addition to the Milloy family, the member for Kitchener Centre. Last Saturday evening, John and Sara gave birth—mostly Sara, I'm told—to a beautiful eight-pound, nine-ounce baby boy. Mom and dad are doing just fine.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move that the following amendments be made to the membership of certain committees:

On the standing committee on estimates, Mr. Dunlop replaces Mr. O'Toole; on the standing committee on

finance and economic affairs, Mr. Arthurs replaces Mr. Colle.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has moved that the following amendments be made to the membership of certain committees:

On the standing committee on estimates, Mr. Dunlop replaces Mr. O'Toole; on the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, Mr. Arthurs replaces Mr. Colle.

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

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, October 17, 2005, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has moved that, pursuant to standing—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispensed.

Shall the motion carry?

Interjections.

The Speaker: No, we'll do it. I heard a no.

Mr. Bradley has moved that, pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, October 17, 2005, for the purpose of considering government business. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1357 to 1402.

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

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Qaadri, Shafiq
Baird, John R.	Hardeman, Ernie	Racco, Mario G.
Bartolucci, Rick	Hudak, Tim	Ramal, Khalil
Bentley, Christopher	Jackson, Cameron	Rinaldi, Lou
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jeffrey, Linda	Runciman, Robert W.
Bradley, James J.	Klees, Frank	Ruprecht, Tony
Brownell, Jim	Kular, Kuldip	Sandals, Liz
Bryant, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Scott, Laurie
Cansfield, Donna H.	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Smith, Monique
Caplan, David	Leal, Jeff	Smitherman, George
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Levac, Dave	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Chudleigh, Ted	Marsales, Judy	Takhar, Harinder S.
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Tory, John
Craitor, Kim	McMeekin, Ted	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	McNeely, Phil	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Di Cocco, Caroline	O'Toole, John	Witmer, Elizabeth
Dombrowsky, Leona	Oraziotti, David	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Parsons, Ernie	Yakabuski, John
Dunlop, Garfield	Peters, Steve	Zimmer, David
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Phillips, Gerry	
Fonseca, Peter	Pupatello, Sandra	

The Speaker: All those opposed will please rise one at a time.

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Marchese, Rosario
Churley, Marilyn	Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 67; the nays are 6.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

SEMAINE DES BIBLIOTHÈQUES PUBLIQUES DE L'ONTARIO

ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARY WEEK

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur (ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones): C'est avec plaisir que je me lève devant la Chambre aujourd'hui pour faire honneur à nos bibliothèques publiques et à nos bibliothèques des Premières nations durant la Semaine des bibliothèques publiques de l'Ontario, qui se déroulera jusqu'au 23 octobre. Le thème de la Semaine des bibliothèques publiques de l'Ontario est Destination Imagination.

Destination Imagination is the perfect theme to celebrate the great selection of creative stories in our libraries and an outstanding range of programs, resources and services that help build stronger, healthier communities. We should all be very proud of our libraries. Ontario has one of the best public library systems in the world.

La Semaine des bibliothèques publiques de l'Ontario est un excellent moyen de faire honneur aux contributions culturelles, éducatives et économiques qu'apportent nos bibliothèques. Source fiable d'information dans nos collectivités, elles assurent la réussite de nos étudiants, maintiennent la compétitivité de nos entreprises et améliorent notre qualité de vie.

En utilisant une nouvelle technologie pour numériser l'histoire locale et permettre aux gens d'accéder à l'Internet grâce à plus de 6 000 ordinateurs dans toute la province, les bibliothèques publiques sont véritablement devenues l'une de nos plus importantes ressources communautaires, au service des Ontariens et Ontariennes de tout âge.

In 2003, 66 million people visited our public libraries, circulating more than 100 million items. In that same year, more than 2.2 million people participated in over 110,000 library programs.

En 2003, 66 millions de personnes ont visité nos bibliothèques publiques, circulant plus de 100 millions de documents. Au cours de la même année, plus de 2,2 millions de personnes ont participé aux plus de 110 000 programmes organisés par les bibliothèques.

Our public libraries make our province a better place to live and work. I encourage all residents to visit their local public libraries this week to take part in the celebration. To each of you, I extend a special invitation to add one of your local libraries to your destination list.

Bonne Semaine des bibliothèques publiques.

HEALTH PROMOTION PROMOTION DE LA SANTÉ

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion):

I'm honoured today to stand before you to give my first statement as Ontario's Minister of Health Promotion. As members know, Premier McGuinty announced the creation of the Ministry of Health Promotion last June. It was an historic announcement because it's the first time Ontario has had a ministry devoted entirely to the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles.

It was with interest I noted just last Friday that the Premier of Saskatchewan appointed a counterpart and followed our lead by creating the new Ministry of Healthy Living.

The smoke-free Ontario campaign tops our list of key priorities as the cornerstone of our government's health promotion effort. My number one priority is to deliver on the promise we made during our election campaign, the promise to move toward a smoke-free Ontario.

The groundwork for that task has already been laid by my cabinet colleague the Honourable George Smitherman, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and Dr. Sheela Basrur, our chief medical officer of health. As you know, the work that these two and many others in this House and in the community did on Bill 164, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, was a tremendous and positive step forward. The bill was passed and received royal assent in June of this year. In essence, it will ban smoking in all enclosed workplaces and public places in the province beginning on May 31 next year, and will phase out the display of tobacco products, with a complete ban beginning May 31, 2008. I thank my colleague from Ottawa-Orléans for the work that he did on that file.

1410

In addition to helping Ontarians quit smoking, smoke-free Ontario aims to prevent our young people from starting to smoke and to protect all Ontarians from exposure to second-hand smoke.

Il s'agit de la plus vaste campagne de lutte contre le tabagisme de l'histoire de la province de l'Ontario. Je dois aussi ajouter que la campagne Ontario sans fumée fera de notre province un des chefs de file en Amérique du Nord en matière de lutte contre le tabagisme.

Pour appuyer cette campagne, nous avons mis sur pied le Comité consultatif de la campagne Ontario sans fumée, qui est composé de 15 membres. Avec l'aide de ce comité, nous inciterons les Ontariennes et Ontariens à s'engager à préserver leur santé et celle des autres.

I am proud to be chairing the smoke-free Ontario campaign committee and grateful for the experience and

expertise of the committee members. I'd like to give you a list of those committee members and a brief summary of their contributions:

John Beaucage, former chief of the Wasauksing First Nation, chief, and president of the Union of Ontario Indians, with a strong commitment to the Premier's brighter future for aboriginal children and youth initiative;

Ted Boadway, executive director of health policy for the Ontario Medical Association, who led the OMA fight against tobacco;

Peter Goodhand, chief executive director of the Canadian Cancer Society's Ontario division, an organization that has one of the most long-standing commitments to tobacco control;

Steve Goren, past president of the Ontario Dental Association, who played an important role in the clinical tobacco intervention program;

Marc Kealey, chief executive officer of the Ontario Pharmacists' Association and a strong supporter of the clinical tobacco intervention program;

Michael Perley, executive director of the Ontario Campaign for Action on Tobacco and a leader of the tobacco control movement for more than a decade, with notable success in moving the Ontario tobacco strategy forward community by community;

Andrew Pipe, founder of Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada and director of prevention and rehabilitation at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, who has demonstrated outstanding scientific and professional leadership in the tobacco control battle;

Manu Malkani, president and chief executive officer of the Ontario Lung Association, an organization that has been impressing upon young people the dangers of smoking;

Isabelle Michel, gérante de pratique professionnelle et de développement au Service de santé publique de Sudbury et du district, qui a une vaste expérience et une compréhension du rôle des services de santé publique dans la lutte contre le tabagisme;

Merle Nicholds, former mayor of Kanata and active community volunteer for asthma and cancer awareness campaigns;

Jenny Rajaballey, vice-president of health care planning at Cambridge Memorial Hospital;

Rocco Rossi, chief executive officer of the Ontario Heart and Stroke Foundation, and key in fighting tobacco advertising aimed at young people;

Terry Sullivan, president and chief executive officer of Cancer Care Ontario, who has had a strong background in tobacco control and representing an organization that is developing an aboriginal tobacco strategy;

Michelle Tham, an anti-smoking activist since the age of 14, who has worked with the youth advisory group that brought us the ministry's very successful stupid.ca campaign aimed at steering young people away from smoking; and finally,

Carol Timmings, director of chronic disease prevention at Toronto Public Health, who brings many years of experience in developing prevention programs.

All of these men and women from across the province of Ontario are giving of their time and their expertise. They are volunteers, and I'm very appreciative of their efforts.

Je suis ravi d'avoir l'occasion de travailler avec ces professionnels dévoués à réduire l'usage du tabac et à sauver des vies.

These people will be making a concerned effort to advise the government on developing regulations for the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, preparing for enforcement of the new act on May 31, 2006, rolling out educational programs this fall aimed particularly at young people, creating a provincial smoking cessation program, and evaluating the results of the campaign.

In conclusion, I'd be remiss if I did not take this opportunity to pay tribute to someone who has been, for us, a living, breathing example of why the smoke-free legislation is so important. Many of you will remember Heather Crowe. Heather is the waitress who developed lung cancer due to second-hand smoke and who has been featured in many of the commercials and material related to the need to protect non-smokers from the ravages of second-hand smoke. Heather's cancer, unfortunately, has advanced considerably, and she now resides in a nursing home to get the additional support for living and pain management that has become necessary.

Despite this, Heather continues to speak out and to speak to hospitality workers and legislators across the country about the need to take action. In fact, last week she received an award from an Ottawa youth group, Exposé, for her work in letting young people know the devastating consequences of second-hand smoke.

I spoke with Heather a few weeks ago when she attended a farewell reception for Dr. Rob Cushman, who was leaving as our very well known and well regarded chief medical officer of health in Ottawa, and she was still at this point offering to do whatever she could to help me in my new portfolio.

On behalf of all of us, I believe, in this chamber, I'd like to thank Heather for her courage, dedication and commitment to this cause. Single-handedly, Heather has made an unparalleled contribution to our society.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy): I am pleased to announce today that our government has reached an agreement with Bruce Power. Throughout the negotiation process, the government's key objectives were to reach an agreement that is fair for Ontario ratepayers and taxpayers and to ensure that the financial risks would not be left on the shoulders of Ontarians. I'm pleased to report to the House that the government was successful in meeting these objectives. Bruce Power has agreed to pay the full cost of the capital upgrades required to bring units 1 and 2 on-line. In addition, Bruce

Power is paying the full capital costs of refurbishing unit 3 when it reaches the end of its operational life and replacing the steam generators at unit 4. The investment by Bruce Power is estimated to be \$4.25 billion. Ontario ratepayers and taxpayers will not—not—be contributing capital funds to this project. Let me say this again: Ontario ratepayers and taxpayers will not be contributing capital dollars to this project.

This project will deliver 1,500 megawatts of electricity, a significant boost to our province's energy supply. To put this into perspective, refurbishing units 1 and 2 will generate almost as much power as Niagara Falls. That's enough power for one million homes, or a city the size of Ottawa. In addition to increasing our electricity generation capacity, this four-year project is estimated to create an additional 1,500 construction jobs. This will have a significant impact on the security, growth and prosperity of the community.

I would like to thank all staff in the Ministry of Energy who were involved in this initiative. Thank you for your hard work on behalf of all Ontarians.

This truly is a landmark transaction for our province, but it is not a decision we have taken lightly. To ensure that we are reaching the best agreement possible for Ontario ratepayers and taxpayers, the agreement was subjected to a number of due diligence reviews by financial, legal and technical advisers, all of whom have signed off on the agreement that has been reached. I would like to express my thanks to our advisers for their counsel throughout this process.

In addition to these due diligence reviews, the government engaged CIBC World Markets to conduct a review of the agreement and to provide a fairness opinion. I am pleased to report today that CIBC has indicated that the agreement is a fair deal for Ontario ratepayers and taxpayers.

The final contract was also subject to cabinet approval.

The agreement and the fairness opinion have been posted on the ministry's Web site as of today at 1 o'clock so that all Ontarians can have access to this information.

Finally, I'm pleased to report to the House that I've referred the agreement to the Auditor General for review.

1420

As honourable members know, Ontario faces a looming electricity supply gap, the result of inaction by previous governments. I would like to remind the House of the dire straits in which previous administrations have left us. Following 10 years of neglect, there was no plan for new electricity generation, no plan for energy conservation, no strategy for managing our existing access, no accountability, no transparency or oversight of our crown corporations and absolutely no leadership. In the 10 years leading up to the last election, less than 2,900 megawatts of new power was brought on-line in Ontario, and yet, over the next 15 years, Ontarians will need to refurbish, rebuild or replace 25,000 megawatts of supply.

One week ago I was appointed Minister of Energy, with a mandate to continue the transformation of our

electricity system to ensure the future prosperity of our province. I'm honoured to serve this province, and accept this responsibility with great humility. I had the pleasure of working very closely with my predecessor, the member for Windsor–St. Clair, who was responsible for turning around a system that was beginning to fall to pieces.

The member for Windsor–St. Clair deserves our sincere thanks and appreciation for starting the process of transforming our energy system. We have come a long way, and we have further to go. Let me tell you, I'm here to finish the job.

In the days and weeks ahead, I will be taking bold and decisive action to ensure Ontario has an energy system that is safe, clean, reliable and affordable, and that we deliver on our plan. Our energy plan consists of three key components: We will maximize our existing generation and transmission assets; we will build new generation capacity; and we will create a culture of conservation in this province.

This agreement with Bruce Power ensures that we continue to maximize our existing assets to ensure a stable supply of energy. This government has set the wheels in motion to create more new generating capacity than any other jurisdiction in North America, with nearly 9,000 megawatts of diversified generating capacity, enough for 4.1 million homes. I will continue to carry out this plan.

Our plan is bold; our vision for our province is clear: an Ontario where industry has a reliable source of clean, affordable energy; an Ontario that leads in sustainable and affordable energy supply; and an Ontario that remains prosperous and the envy of the world. I will carry out this plan, and I look forward to working with all Ontarians to make it happen.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Responses?

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): First, let me congratulate the new Minister of Energy on her appointment; I wish her the very best.

What a difference a week makes. A week ago, I would have been making this response to the former Minister of Energy, but the self-proclaimed expert on human evolution has decided to write his thesis on neanderthals from seat five, so we will respond to the statement from this minister.

While we believe this is a positive move, we ask the government what took so long—two years. While the energy situation in this province has deteriorated, they've taken two years to reach this agreement with Bruce Power. The fact that they have reached this agreement is a complete validation of the previous government's plan to enter into a private-public partnership with Bruce Power.

They're taking credit for bringing all this power online. I think it should be pointed out that the agreement to refurbish Bruce units 3 and 4 was done under the previous government.

One of the problems is that with their dithering over two years, this project will not be done before their self-imposed deadline to shut down 25% of our power supply

in Ontario, with no plan for how to replace it. The other concern we have is that power consumption and demand in this province are growing at a minimum rate of 250 megawatts a year. By the time this work is completed, we will have eaten up 1,000 of the 1,500 megawatts this project is supposed to provide.

Under this government's policies, Ontarians are continuing to fall further and further behind. This announcement, while it is positive, will not answer the question of where we in this province are going to be in 2007 and 2009 with regard to our energy needs under the policies of this government. They have yet to answer those questions. We are awaiting those answers.

HEALTH PROMOTION

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): Congratulations to the new energy minister on her first speech.

I'd just like to briefly respond to the announcement that was made today by Minister Watson regarding smoking and tobacco. Certainly we support any initiatives that are going to have a positive impact on ensuring that young people do not start to smoke. We also think that much more needs to be done in the way of cessation programs; I see that's going to happen. I see you've set up a committee, and I hope you will allow all those individuals to participate fully in the discussions and decision-making.

The one thing I do not see reflected here is that as this policy moves forward, we also need to be cognizant that it's going to have an impact on the economy of this province. I hope you will take a look at how you will deal with those who are no longer going to have their livelihood, and what you are prepared to do as well to assist those individuals who grow the tobacco and what other crops are available for them.

We applaud you today. There are still far too many people who die of cancer. We certainly wish the committee well in all their endeavours.

ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARY WEEK

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): I would like to speak briefly to the fact that this is library week. I think it's extremely important that the government remember what they have done this year. Here is a headline: "Ontario Slashes Library Funding \$1.2 M." This was in the Toronto Star on June 27 this year, and the other headline says, "Budget cuts called 'kick in the teeth' for rural areas."

This government "quietly slashed funding for public libraries." Not only did they hurt all libraries in the province of Ontario, but they particularly hurt rural and northern libraries, because there was this cut of \$1.2 million from services, including the interlibrary loan system. Again, people say that this "flies in the face" of a government that says it's emphasizing education and yet is taking away this tool from people in this province. In

fact, the chief librarian at Bruce County Public Library said that at least with Harris, you knew what he was going to do. "These guys just did it and ran"—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Response?

1430

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): I want to reply to the Minister of Energy and the McGuinty government on today's announcement about the McGuinty government now endorsing private nuclear power in the province of Ontario.

What I want to do, though, is contrast what the McGuinty government is saying with what the private corporations are saying. The McGuinty government wants the people of Ontario to believe that this will only cost them \$4.25 billion. What do you get for \$4.25 billion? Do you get a new facility? No. For \$4.25 billion you get a fixer-upper.

It is very important that the hydro ratepayers in the province read the print that is enclosed in what the private corporation is saying to investors. Here is TransCanada PipeLines' press release. What do they say on page 4 of the press release? The McGuinty government doesn't want to talk about this. They point out that if there are cost overruns with these facilities, the ratepayers of Ontario pick up 50% of the cost overrun up to \$618 million and 25% beyond that.

Some of us have watched nuclear power in Ontario over the past 30 years. There has never been a nuclear plant constructed or refurbished that has come in at cost. To repeat: Darlington was supposed to cost \$4.7 billion. When it was built by the former Liberal government under David Peterson, it came in at \$15 billion—a \$10-billion cost overrun. Pickering was supposed to cost, oh, about \$800 million for total refurbishment. The final bill still isn't in on that, but the cost overrun was more than 50%.

The McGuinty government wants hydro consumers to believe that you get a good deal at \$4.25 billion, but if there is a \$2-billion cost overrun, the people of Ontario pick up another billion dollars, so that a \$4.25-billion cost suddenly becomes a \$5.25-billion cost.

But then you have to read TransCanada's note to their investors, because what it also says is that in this deal the lease costs for units 1, 2 and 3 will each be reduced by \$20 million per year. Well, \$20 million times three is \$60 million. The government talks about a 20-year agreement: over 20 years, another \$1.2 billion. So suddenly what the McGuinty government wants to sell to hydro consumers as a \$4.25-billion good deal becomes an over-\$6.5-billion deal. What do you get for it? Do you get brand, spanking new nuclear reactors? No. You get another nuclear fixer-upper.

The McGuinty government says this is a good deal. What is really also missing here is, I was hoping we would hear from the McGuinty government today a

strategy for dealing with nuclear waste because we've been accumulating radioactive nuclear waste now since the 1960s and still no plan for the storage of very toxic nuclear waste—no plan. I was hoping the McGuinty government would disclose how they're going to balance this private corporation's drive for profit against protecting the public interest in terms of public safety. Any plan today? Nothing.

I want to be clear what this is: This is a sweetheart deal for a private nuclear company. The McGuinty government advertises it at \$4.25 billion. You read the fine print: This is easily a \$6.5-billion sweetheart deal for private nuclear power.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I'd like to welcome our friend Bob Frankford, who was the MPP for Scarborough East in the 35th Parliament. Bob is in the west public gallery. Welcome, Bob.

ORAL QUESTIONS

CRIME PREVENTION

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. I understand that the government is preoccupied with other matters, given the resignation we saw last week, but in light of your relative silence to date, can you list for us the specific initiatives implemented by your government in recent months to address the gun crime we've seen for months and months here in Toronto and in other communities around the province?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I'm pleased to be able to speak to this question. I know this is a matter that concerns all of us. Let me just take the opportunity today, on behalf of everybody in the House, I know, to extend our sympathies to the TTC bus driver who sadly sustained injury during the course of the weekend.

There is a real issue before all of us when it comes to guns and gangs, particularly insofar as it affects the city of Toronto, and we have a role to play in this; of that, there is no doubt. In addition to the federal government, the municipal government, the police and, I would argue, the communities themselves as well here in the province, we have some responsibility too. I can say, with respect to our general approach—and I'll provide more details in ensuing questions—we believe that an intelligent approach to crime demands that it be two-pronged in nature, that you be both tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. I look forward to providing more details in ensuing questions.

Mr. Tory: I agree with the Premier, and you said the same thing in the throne speech about being tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. But the fact of

the matter is that only after intense pressure did you or anybody from your government say anything on this subject. The Attorney General of Ontario set out to a hastily arranged news conference, where he put forward a series of measures—no timing, no funding, no details. In fact, just now you had no answer when it came to the specifics of what you've done. That press conference he had was 47 days ago, and we've heard nothing in terms of details from your government since.

My question is this: How many gun shops, whether they needed it or not, have been inspected, as promised 47 days ago? What about a gun amnesty program? Crime Stoppers managed to come up with one. Where's yours? And what specifically have you done on gun sentencing and crime that you talked about in the throne speech? Specifically, what have you done about it?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I'll detail some of the things we've done with respect to getting tough on crime, and in a supplementary, I'll talk about some of those things we've done with respect to causes of crime.

Of course, you will know that we are putting another 1,000 police officers on the streets of Ontario. We've already hired 29 new judges, 50 new crown attorneys and 55 more parole and probation officers. We've established an anti-guns-and-gangs unit to make it easier for all law enforcement personnel to work together. It is true, the Attorney General is seeking tougher penalties in the Criminal Code for gun-related crimes. I am pleased to report as well that we are the first jurisdiction in North America to make mandatory the reporting of gunshot wounds. We've also brought in new tools for our prosecutors, improved the witness protection program, launched a blitz of gun businesses and several other initiatives, and there's more to come.

Mr. Tory: I think most people in Ontario would want to see what you're doing to stop gunshot wounds from happening instead of just reporting them.

This weekend, police forces in Toronto and Barrie were left to investigate horrific shootings, including the one you referred to, and I join you in expressing our condolences to the bus driver involved, an innocent bus driver shot in the face while driving a bus in Toronto. Unfortunately, this is a pattern that has plagued our cities all summer long. Twenty-nine months ago, you promised for the first time to put 1,000 new police officers on the streets. As of today, 29 months after the promise, there's not 1,000, there's not 100, there's not one new police officer on the streets of this province based on that promise, and that, I tell you, is not acceptable.

In each instance, your government is long on talk and short on results, and nowhere are the results needed more than in fighting gun crime. When can we expect some real action and some real results from your government? When?

1440

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I have already listed a number of initiatives with respect to dealing with crime and attacking criminality itself.

There is another important dimension to this, one which in fact the union representative made reference to in his remarks reported in the media today. He said, "We need to establish better programs in the inner city to make sure that these young people ... have avenues to allocate their time so they're not hanging out on the streets." I fully support the sentiment conveyed in that statement.

So in addition to those elements where we are getting tough on crime, we're doing some other things to reach kids before they get involved in criminal activity.

We've introduced community use of schools. As a result of cuts made by the former Conservative government, those were shut down. Now opportunities for young people have opened up in those schools again.

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities recently announced a new pre-apprenticeship project to ensure that young people get the necessary skills to enrol in apprenticeship programs.

We have summer job programs that we are supporting, together with the city of Toronto as well.

We have done much, and there is still more to do.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My next question is for the Premier as well. Premier, like crime, you have been silent on another important issue facing communities across Ontario. Do you have a plan, or have you insisted there be a plan, with respect to the possibility that the US border might close to garbage from the greater Toronto area?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I know that the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment is eager to speak to this, but let me just begin by saying that we are working with the city of Toronto. The responsibility, of course, for management of waste is municipal. Businesses which have contracts of their own also must assume responsibility for that. There is a contract in place. We are assured by the city of Toronto that should the hauler be unable to deliver that garbage to the landfill site in question, it has an ensuing responsibility to deliver it to yet another landfill site. We will continue to monitor the situation very closely.

If the leader of the official opposition has specific sites in mind, I would ask that he put those communities on notice today so that they have some understanding of where it is he thinks Toronto's waste should be delivered.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Stop the clock. Order.

Supplementary?

Mr. Tory: The Premier would try to pass the buck on this to anybody he could, including me. But the bottom line is, just think about your own answer you just gave, where you said that the contractor has the responsibility to find some other place for it.

If the border is closed, I say to you, Mr. Premier, where are they going to put it—under their bed? For goodness' sake, your own environment minister said it best two weeks ago when she said that your government has no plan to deal with the possibility of the border being closed.

Toronto, York, Peel and Durham all now rely on Michigan to dispose of their garbage. They issued to you a report that outlines 12 Ontario landfills that could take waste, but warns that all of that capacity would be full in six months. It also recommended that your government should be involved in developing a contingency plan.

Premier, given that that report was eight months ago and we've heard precisely zero from you or your minister since then, I will ask you again: Are you working on a plan or are you requiring that a plan be delivered to you by a specific date from the municipalities you say are responsible? If not, why not, and if you are working on such a plan, when will it be made public?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the parliamentary assistant, Speaker.

The Speaker: The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, congratulations; Hugh Edighoffer would be proud of you, sir.

I would be remiss if I didn't note, for all the members of the House, that I'm sure we all join in sending congratulations to our colleague the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore on the safe delivery of her two bouncing baby boys, Zachary and Ryan.

Applause.

Mr. Wilkinson: I'm at a loss to listen to the Leader of the Opposition, because I'm referred to the Tory party Web site of February 24 this year—a beautiful picture of one John Tory on it, and, I might add, a quote from Mr. Tory himself: “All municipalities must have long-term contingency plans for the management of waste to safeguard the environment and public health.”

It seems that we've had some revelation here. If you'd like to suggest to us what communities in Ontario you think should be taking that trash, you just let us know over here.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Stop the clock.

Leader of the Opposition, final supplementary.

Mr. Tory: This is an important occasion for the member to be answering his first question, but I must say it was a very, very poor start, because the fact of the matter is, to the member, I will name four communities that need to have plans. It is your obligation and the Premier's obligation, and the question is to the Premier. Let's start with the government requiring, as it's mandated to do, plans from Toronto, York, Peel and Durham, which is what I asked for.

Premier, your government has been in office for two long years now. In those two years you've done nothing except to sit on a report for eight months about garbage in this province. You haven't developed a plan, you

haven't required anybody else to develop a plan, nor have you done anything to really embrace the new technologies in this area. You've done nothing. Don't you think it's time that you gave yourself and everyone else involved, including those communities, a real deadline by which they have to come forward with a plan as to what we're going to do?

Mr. Wilkinson: The McGuinty government has done more in the last two years than the Leader of the Opposition's party did in eight years. Your bright idea was that Toronto should take its trash, put it on a train, go up 600 kilometres and dump it in a lake, and you're coming in here and telling us that we don't have a plan?

We have an amazing plan. The first thing we tell municipalities is that we remind them, as all parties have agreed in this House forever, that waste is a municipal issue. The responsibility of our ministry is, if requirements come before us, solutions come before us, that we will take a look at that and we'll be expeditious in our reply. Because of that, new landfill sites have been approved in this province in the last two years. Perhaps you're unaware of that. Given the Tory tiny researchers around here, there are a lot of things you're unaware of.

But I want to say that it's nice to see that Adam Vaughan has lit a fire under the Leader of the Opposition today.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is to the Premier. Premier, in May you promised, and I quote, “an open and public debate on nuclear power.” Today you acknowledge that you have already signed a private nuclear deal with Bruce Power for more than \$4.25 billion. Nuclear power is expensive and unreliable, with serious concerns about nuclear safety, storage of nuclear waste, and profit-driven private operators. Premier, what happened to your promise of an open and public debate?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I thank the member for the question. Let me just say that it's important to understand the context in which we find ourselves. Over the course of the next 15 years we are required, as a province, to replace, renew or refurbish some 25,000 megawatts of generation. That's one huge challenge.

I'm pleased to say that, as a government, we have grabbed the energy bull by the horns. We are the most active jurisdiction in all of North America. Like my friend, I would love it if we lived in a world where we could rely entirely on solar, wind power and hydro-electric, but we live in this world, not that one. So we are absolutely determined to leave no stone unturned when it comes to ensuring that we have in place a reliable supply of clean, responsibly priced, reasonably priced electricity.

This deal that we're doing with Bruce Power is a fair deal. It is a reasonable deal. It has been approved by fairness oversight. It's a matter that we also return to the Auditor General for the province of Ontario. In fact, the

contract is on-line now. It's over 200 pages. We've been very open, very public, very transparent.

1450

Mr. Hampton: Premier, the question was about what happened to the promise you made to the people of Ontario about an open and public debate.

Now, as for your deal for privatized nuclear power, it is a sweetheart deal for Bruce Power. OPG says that nuclear power costs about four and half cents a kilowatt hour to produce, but your private deal with Bruce Power will give them 6.3 cents plus inflation. That's 33% more for this private, profit-driven nuclear operator.

Premier, Ontario families and Ontario industries are already paying a lot more on their hydro bills because of your broken promises and your electricity mistakes. How do you justify making them pay 33% more for privatized nuclear power?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: The price of this deal is 6.3 cents per kilowatt hour. It has been, since January of this year, averaging 6.7 cents per kilowatt hour, so we think this is a fair deal in the circumstances. Everybody would like to have lower-priced electricity. We'd like to find ourselves in a position where, frankly, this work could have been started some eight or 10 years ago. But it wasn't, so here we are, and we are determined to get the job done.

In addition to this particular arrangement that we're entering into with Bruce Power, we have done much by way of insuring that we've already brought some 2,200 megawatts of new generation on-line. We have 9,000 more megawatts in the pipeline, 1,500 of which are going to be represented by this particular arrangement. This is the kind of arrangement which we have spent a great deal of time deliberating. There are no easy answers when it comes to generating new electricity in the province of Ontario, but I'm convinced at the end of the day that this is fair, it is reasonable and it protects the interests of ratepayers.

Mr. Hampton: The Premier says that this is a good deal for ratepayers, but if the private nuclear deal at the Bruce goes over budget—and nuclear projects always go over budget—then hydro consumers will have to pick up half the cost overrun. If the project goes over by \$2.5 billion, which is not unheard of, hydro's consumers pay another \$1 billion. That makes your \$4.25-billion deal into a \$5.25-billion deal. Premier, why are you forcing ordinary families to pay for cost overruns by a profit-driven private nuclear plant?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Just so we have a good understanding of our recent history in this regard, ratepayers were required to pick up 100% of the \$1-billion cost overrun when it came to the Pickering reactor retrofit. What we have managed to do is to shift 50% of potential overruns to the private sector. In an ideal world we would love to have been able to shift 100% of the cost overruns. One of the things we had done—and it was in the background information that was put out today—is that we had CIBC act as an overseer. They compared this particular arrangement with, I believe, some 18 others,

typical deals, similar deals, in North America and perhaps other parts of the world as well. They said that this was fair, it was in keeping with standards and that this was fair again to both ratepayers and taxpayers. This is not easy for us, to ensure that we have a reliable supply of electricity, but I can tell you we are determined to make that happen for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Hampton: Premier, yes, I'm sure that CIBC believes this is a great deal for the private, profit-driven nuclear operator. There were cost overruns at Pickering, but Pickering didn't cost in the neighbourhood of \$6.5 billion, which is where you're headed here.

It's interesting to read the briefing note from Trans-Canada, because they say that the McGuinty government's going to give them a \$60-million reduction on the lease costs every year. So over a 20-year deal, that's another \$1.2 billion more for a profit-driven private nuclear operator. No wonder CIBC thinks this is such a great deal. You're shovelling money out the door to a private, profit-driven nuclear operator. Premier, how do you justify giving a profit-driven private nuclear operator another \$1.2 billion that you don't even refer to in your press release?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy): I'm pleased to respond to the honourable member's question. I have to tell you, I just started reading a new book and I got to page 18, where they spoke about, "I'm not ideologically opposed to private power." I wonder who wrote that particular book.

We have to replace 25,000 megawatts of new supply by the year 2020. Our government has a plan to provide safe, clean, reliable energy, and we will do it three ways: We will build, we will refurbish and maximize what we've got, and we will create a culture of conservation. We will ask all Ontarians to work with us to do it.

I can assure you that at 6.3 cents, when the current price from January to October is 6.8 cents, is a good deal for Ontario, in addition to the fact that \$4.25 billion will not be borne, as the \$10 billion was, as three times what Pickering cost—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Hampton: I'm not sure what the answer was. The question was about, how do you justify giving this profit-driven private nuclear company a further \$1.2 billion, and you don't even refer to it in your press release?

Do you know what is really galling here? When you read the fine print, this doesn't even provide new supply. Under the fine print, if Bruce A units 1 and 2 come on-line in 2009—and that's a big "if"—then units 3 and 4 will come down for further refurbishment. This doesn't add new supply. If these come on-line, the other ones come down. As for all of your statements about 9,000 megawatts of new supply, here again it's not true.

How do you justify a \$6.5-billion deal for a profit-driven private nuclear operator when people don't—

The Speaker: The question has been asked. Minister.

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: Let me talk a little bit about that 9,000. We have clean energy supply and demand

side at 1,955 megawatts; the Niagara tunnel at 200 megawatts; first renewable, 395 megawatts; the second renewable RFP is 200 megawatts; and the third RFP is 1,000 megawatts; replacement of Thunder Bay, 310 megawatts; cogen, 1,000; downtown Toronto, 500; west GTA, 1,000; and demand side at 250. This is in addition to 1,500 megawatts of new supply. If the member did read the fine print, he'd know that it's to put a new steam generator in, and that it's a normal practice throughout the process of a nuclear plant to deal with outages.

Mr. Hampton: The McGuinty government refers to new supply, as changing Thunder Bay over to gas-fired as new supply. It simply replaces old supply. You refer to 1,000 new megawatts in the west of the GTA. Every day when I pick up the paper, I find more of those so-called new gas-fired generating stations falling off the page. Then you say that Bruce Power A refurbishment of units 1 and 2 is new supply, but if 3 and 4 come down, it isn't new supply. This is \$6.5 billion for the hydro ratepayers of the province, and there's no new supply.

I ask again, what happened to the Premier's promise, made only six months ago, of a full, open public debate about nuclear power?

Hon. Mrs. Cansfield: The Ontario Power Authority, which was given instructions under Bill 100, is in fact conducting consultations now on this particular issue. That report will be coming to the ministry by December 1. We are dealing with an existing contract that is in place until the year 2018, with an additional 25-year option. We started these discussions after Bruce did their feasibility study about a year ago.

1500

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington): My question is for the Minister of Health. Today in the members' gallery, we are joined by 25 cancer patients from our province, who earlier at our Queen's Park press conference made an impassioned plea to both you and your government to fix a gap that exists in access to cancer treatment in our province, which differentiates between those services received by oral chemotherapy and those that are received by intravenous chemotherapy.

After Health Canada approves any new cancer drug, or any drug, for that matter, Ontario conducts its own review, as you well know. Until it is completed, your ministry has a process that will make exemption to cover the costs of oral drugs as recommended by an oncologist through this section 8 process. This, in effect, creates two classes of cancer patients in our province.

Minister, will you please consider having an exemption and an approval process for oral chemotherapy? Why is it that you have it for oral chemotherapy, but you have no application process to your ministry for coverage of intravenous chemotherapy treatment in our province?

Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care): I had the chance to speak to this issue somewhat at estimates with the honourable mem-

ber. I recently indicated, "Yes, indeed," to his question of will we take a look at processes designed to continue to build on our capacity to fund cancer drugs in our province.

It's of note that our new drug budget related to cancer since we came to office, a budget that is administered by Cancer Care Ontario, has more than doubled. I think this stands as our commitment to make sure that Ontario patients are receiving access to those drugs that are deemed to be clinically efficacious. In an environment where new drugs are coming on-line all the time, we need to continue to make sure that we have a process that builds in equitable response with science-based, evidence-based decision-making. But to the honourable member's direct question of will we take a look at this, I indicated to him at estimates that we would, and I'm happy to reassert that today in the House.

Mr. Jackson: This review is months and months away, and you're not listening to the basic question being asked by cancer patients who are here today. Carolyn Henry from the London North Centre riding, who has multiple myeloma, stated earlier that today it will be costing her approximately \$35,000, and she will pay thousands more to have the drug administered in a private clinic. "This will put my family into severe financial distress." This is happening today. The courageous Suzanne Aucoin from the St. Catharines riding, who has colorectal cancer and has been travelling to Buffalo, spent US\$65,000 and will return next week with her chequebook for treatment of a drug that's today approved by Health Canada. Dr. Donna Reece at Princess Margaret Hospital said, "As an oncologist, it's painful to watch patients die on waiting lists when treatment for some with long-term remission is available."

Minister, this is simply a policy decision for you to make. Will you create a matching section 8 policy approval process so that those patients who need intravenous chemotherapy treatment, life-saving treatment, will be able to apply and not have to—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The question has been asked. Minister?

Hon. George Smitherman: I think it would be helpful for the public discussion to make members and people listening aware that no cancer agency in Canada has provided full public funding for this drug. We are working very hard, consistent with the necessity of equitable response, and also evidence-based decision-making, to move this quickly through a process, working alongside the DQTC and alongside a Cancer Care Ontario subcommittee.

We recognize, of course, that the paramountcy for patients is access to any and all treatment that is designed to have some benefit. It is our responsibility, in a world where more and more products of that nature are available every day, to make sure that we're using a process that provides an equitable response, based on evidence. We're doing that quickly. I think we've demonstrated our commitment by more than doubling those resources.

But to the member's question with respect to process, I indicated to him previously, and I've indicated again today, that that's something we're very keen to take a look at, and very much appreciate his interest.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth): A question for the Premier. Premier, back to the garbage issue, and I hope this time you don't dump the question, so to speak, on the parliamentary assistant, who recycled tired old answers which were no answers at all.

The US House of Representatives could soon vote to allow states to prohibit the import of foreign waste. Within a mere 90 days' notice from Michigan and less than six months of available landfill capacity, the GTA is teetering on the brink of a garbage crisis. What is your plan if Michigan closes the border to GTA garbage?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): To the parliamentary assistant.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): I find it awfully interesting today for the member to be speaking about this issue, because I have two contradictory messages, right here today in the public record. Today, I note that you sent out a press release from Mr. Hampton: "The New Democrats accuse Ontario's Liberal government of negligence for not developing a strategy to deal with Toronto's trash." I also see today in his interview with Mr. Urquhart at the Toronto Star, "We have to make communities and regions responsible for their own development and for their own waste." So you two have a little conclave and then let us know what's going on.

Ms. Churley: Parliamentary assistant, that was a sad, sad answer to a growing crisis in the GTA. You must take this seriously and not keep playing games with it. And let me say this: It's your government, not municipalities, that fumbled the ball. You promised to ban organic wastes in landfills—no action. You were responsible for instituting used oil, electronic waste and tire recycling programs—no action. You issued a discussion paper in June of 2004 on how to achieve your promised 60% waste diversion rate, yet we're nearing the end of 2005, a potential garbage crisis, and there's still no action from you. Where is your plan, which is your responsibility, to divert 60% of the province's waste from landfill?

Mr. Wilkinson: I couldn't disagree more with the member. And it really is nice to see you here today. I know that you have other engagements in this city, but glad to have you here. I can tell you that the McGuinty government has been—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Stop the clock. You know that it is out of order to refer to a member's absence from this place. I'm sure you'll correct that.

Mr. Wilkinson: I withdraw, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize.

What I want to talk about is that I think it's unfair to characterize this government as one that has been doing nothing about waste diversion since we formed a govern-

ment. Within one month of being here, we approved the blue box program, a program that the previous government spent eight years deciding not to do. And now we make sure that industry covers half of the cost of each municipality's requirement into the blue box plan. Our commitment, the 60% diversion—and I might add that today is the beginning of Waste Reduction Week here in this province. I was at an event this morning. That is the future for this province. The McGuinty government embraces those changes. We have said to people repeatedly, and led by example, about the need for us to make sure that we're diverting electronic waste, something that I don't recall any other previous government approving in this province, though you had a chance.

RENEWABLE FUELS

Mr. Jim Brownell (Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh): My question is to the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. Minister, on June 17 of this year I had the opportunity of standing at the site of the proposed ethanol plant in my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh and highlight our government's ethanol growth fund initiative to the Seaway Valley Farmers Co-operative. This initiative of \$520 million over 12 years is a boon for the ethanol industry. The plant in my riding, when built, will produce roughly 69 million litres of ethanol fuel annually, which will help our government reach its announced goal of 10% ethanol at the pumps by 2010. I was delighted to share with the Seaway Valley Farmers Co-operative the details of your announcement of Friday, October 7, when you indicated that the ethanol growth fund is now accepting applications. They were pleased to hear this announcement. Minister, would you explain to us how parties interested in benefiting from the ethanol growth fund can apply for grants?

1510

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs): It is an important question because it is an important initiative. I also want to commend the honourable member for the good work and advocacy that he has had, particularly with the Seaway Valley Farmers Energy Co-operative.

First of all, on October 7, the government did publish the guidelines for our ethanol growth fund. It's important to state publicly that this fund is available for individuals, corporations, farm co-operatives—the one that has been identified by the honourable member. Proponents who are interested in the fund can visit the OMAFRA site to gain the details on the components of the initiative.

Funds allocated under the Ontario ethanol growth fund are for both capital assistance, operating components. There are other parts of the fund that I hope I'll have time to respond to in my supplementary.

Finally, I think it's very important to identify here today that proposals must be received by November 10, 2005, and the results will be announced the third week of December 2005.

Mr. Brownell: Minister, thank you for your assurances and information. I know that you have been a big

supporter of the project for some time in my riding, having met with the Seaway Valley Farmers Energy Co-operative on September 15.

With its ethanol initiative, this government has demonstrated its commitment to the environment and has shown foresight in planning for a stable source of fuel. As you know, my riding is struggling to deal with a series of plant closures and job layoffs that have had a tremendous impact not just on the local economy, but the very livelihood of my communities.

The ethanol plant to be built in Cornwall will create jobs, both directly and indirectly, jobs we truly need. Just as the one-time grant component of the ethanol growth fund will benefit my riding of Stormont–Dundas–Charlottenburgh, so will its various elements be of value to other parts of the province.

Minister, could you explain the various components of the fund as you mentioned in your first answer and how they will be of use to Ontarians.

Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky: As the honourable member has identified, the ethanol growth fund will be an investment in rural communities across Ontario but also a very important priority for our government. This will also be an investment in our environment.

I'd like to speak specifically to the four components of the growth fund. There is of course a capital component that will assist those proponents to invest in capital for the production of ethanol. There will be operating grants that will be available from 2007 until 2017 to promote ethanol production and help the industry manage the fluctuating market that can be experienced in that industry. There is the independence fund that will provide financial support to the independent gasoline distributors who currently blend ethanol, and they may need some assistance to meet the requirements of the new standards. Finally, there is the research and development fund, which we believe is going to help farmers as well as other industries as we work toward a bio-based economy.

TEACHER MISCONDUCT

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): My question is to the Minister of Education. On December 9 of this year, Philip Louis King of Chatham will be eligible to teach in Ontario's public school system again, this despite being found guilty of professional misconduct. That professional misconduct, as you are aware, related to his habit of viewing child pornography on the Internet from a laptop in his classroom, and this despite professional opinions that restoring a teaching certificate to Mr. King is, and I quote, "too big a risk to take." Minister, will you give us your assurance that Philip Louis King will never teach in Ontario classrooms again?

Hon. Gerard Kennedy (Minister of Education): To the member opposite, I understand that he is raising a case that requires serious consideration. We are not at liberty to discuss an individual case here. We're aware of media reports of the names that were raised. I will say that I've made inquiries to the Ontario College of Teachers, which was established by the previous government to

do the exact kind of role that it has in this case, which is to review the merits of the case and take away licences from teachers who don't warrant them, which they have done in many, many cases to do with Internet porn, not in the sense that there have been that many cases, but in most of those cases it has resulted in a permanent suspension of the licences, of the few that there have been.

What I would say is that we in the ministry have made inquiries of the Ontario College of Teachers. We have a meeting with them scheduled, in terms of discussing a number of issues. One of the issues will be our trying to understand whether the media reports, in general, have credence. You will know that there are a number of months, some of the publicly reported facts say, before the person will be reinstated. I will give the undertaking to the member opposite that we will make certain that all the procedures that—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Klees: Minister, you will know that it's more than just media events that were reported. There is a decision by the Ontario College of Teachers that is very public.

I have a quote for you to take into consideration as you review this. Detective Sergeant Paul Gillespie, who is the head of Toronto's child porn unit, said the following: "Every one of these pictures represents a child being tortured...." He goes on to say that restoring the teaching certificates of such individuals is "too big a risk to take."

Minister, it is within your purview, it is your responsibility, to ensure the decision that was made, which is only a two-year suspension, is not adequate. You, as Minister of Education, can assure this House and people across the province that this individual, Philip Louis King, will never again teach in Ontario schools. Will you do that?

Hon. Mr. Kennedy: The assurance I will give this House is that this government will take every measure to protect not just students, but young people in this province, from the scourge of anyone who would like to prey on the vulnerable children of our society in any way, shape or form.

In respect to this particular question, I would note that the Robins report made many recommendations which the member opposite's government declined to implement. This government is bringing those recommendations forward. We'll make sure that there is a complete set of protections in place in our schools to ensure that there is no chance—at least the minimum of chances—that anyone could be exposed to that.

With respect to the case in question, I've given the member opposite my undertaking. It will be followed through in a timely manner to make sure that the procedures to protect children are ensuring that no person who could be a risk will be in a classroom.

CRIME PREVENTION

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is for the Premier. Over the weekend, another

Toronto citizen, a TTC driver, was shot. He is the latest victim of gun violence. Your response so far has been to hold some meetings and conduct a press conference. Premier, when are you going to take action and make the significant social and community investments that are needed to address gun violence issues?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I'll refer this to the Attorney General.

Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General): Obviously the Premier has spoken, I think, for all members of the House in expressing our concern for this TTC driver. I can tell this House that I've asked the victim services secretariat within the Ministry of the Attorney General to provide to this victim the full array of services that are appropriate in this case. In this case, it is appropriate for the victim services secretariat to contact the union because of privacy interests, and we have done that to make sure we're working with the union to ensure that all services are available to that individual.

With respect to what this government is doing and has done with respect to gun violence, it started at the beginning of the mandate with the establishment of the guns-and-gangs task force, which has resulted in literally hundreds of arrests, the seizure of more than 100 firearms, and some convictions as well. We have been on the file of gun violence from day one, and I'm happy to expand on this in our supplementary.

1520

Mr. Hampton: What people have seen is that this government has been missing in action on this issue. Let me be clear: A number of groups and organizations have met with this government, both collectively and individually, and they have outlined for the McGuinty government what needs to be done. They've outlined the fact that you have too many youth who do not have after-school opportunities, you have too many youth who do not have summer job opportunities, you have too many youth who have been kicked out of school, you have too many youth who do not have the opportunities in terms of job training or work.

They're asking this question: When is the McGuinty government going to stop conducting press conferences and when are you going to make the significant social and community investments to address the real issues with these problems?

Hon. Michael Bryant: Well, the member's quite right: This is a very serious issue, and there is no doubt that we have to do everything we can, not only to deal on the enforcement side and the prevention side, but also to deal with at-risk youths. That's why we made the investment of more than \$20 million in annual funding to keep those community schools open. That's why we made the investment of a youth-at-risk summer job initiative. That's why Toronto police services receives funding through the Minister of Community Safety for the PEACE project, which works with young people in the community to target gun violence. That's why we set up the pre-apprenticeship training programs and why we set

up the summer jobs program for at-risk youth. And that's why we made, in addition, a further commitment in the throne speech to ensure that we continue to make significant strides not only in addressing gun violence and preventing gun violence but in addressing the causes of gun violence.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale): My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Minister, the McGuinty government is making the most significant investment in post-secondary education in the last 40 years. The plan features \$1.5 billion in additional student support that will provide enhanced assistance to 135,000 students. The plan will see more students having access to higher-quality education. Minister, in addition to these investments, what has been done to ensure that students have an up-to-date, safe and rewarding learning environment? What has been done to ensure they have the equipment necessary to provide them for a globally competitive, knowledge-based society?

Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): I'd like to thank the member from Willowdale for the question and for his advocacy on behalf of students to ensure they have the type of safe, effective learning environment that he's speaking about.

In the spring, the McGuinty government flowed \$250 million extra in capital and equipment funding support to our universities and colleges. This money is strengthening the foundations for learning. I've had the opportunity over the past several months to tour campuses to see what the colleges and universities are doing with this money.

For example, I've been to Conestoga College, where I saw that they'd invested in new advanced classrooms to ensure more effective learning, but they'd also invested in energy-efficient equipment to ensure that they can save money while learning, and that money they've saved can actually be reinvested in the classroom.

I've also been to Guelph, and I've seen the new learning and growth environment they have, which, more effective for their experiments, saves money for more classroom—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Zimmer: Thank you, Minister. I'm gratified to hear how your ministry has invested in the coming generation. I commend you for this investment.

Specifically, I would like to know what capital money has been invested in Seneca College, whose home is in my riding of Willowdale. Can you tell me what specific improvements students at Seneca College will see?

Hon. Mr. Bentley: I'm not surprised the question is about Seneca College. I hear regularly from the member for Willowdale about Seneca College. I am pleased to announce that of those funds, \$9.2 million was invested in Seneca College.

For example, they've invested in a new teaching facility for, among other programs, veterinary technician programs. They've also invested \$2.2 million for new flight simulators for the aviation and flight technology course. But it doesn't end there. They've invested in a highly accelerated life test environmental chamber. Seneca College is leading many jurisdictions in the type of advanced programming that they can provide. They've also invested heavily to ensure that their classrooms have the most up-to-date electronic equipment. It just shows the type of uses that our colleges and universities are putting this funding to, and I thank Seneca College.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): My question is for the Premier. The forestry sector has been facing a looming crisis for the past two years. Your Minister of Natural Resources has made two announcements to address the crisis. The first was in June, when he released the report that he commissioned, the Minister's Council on Forest Sector Competitiveness; the second earlier this month. Neither announcement adequately responds to the critical core competitiveness issues facing the forestry sector. Why does the province continue to ignore the recommendation of the minister's own expert forestry council?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I thank the member opposite for the question, and he raises a very important, very legitimate issue. The forestry sector is experiencing unprecedented challenges as a result of globalization of the industry. That globalization is leading to consolidations and it's leading to job losses, not just here in Ontario but indeed throughout North America and much of the world. I'm pleased with the response that we've been able to put together with the forestry sector.

The first phase of our three-step response was to put in place a \$350-million loan guarantee program. The second step was a \$150-million forest sector prosperity fund. That is designed specifically to leverage new investments, including value-added manufacturing and co-generation technology. What we want to do is make this fund available so that industry here in Ontario can go through the necessary transition to put themselves on a stronger and more sustainable footing going forward.

Mr. Miller: Thank you, Premier. I'm glad you brought up what you've done so far, because I'll respond to that.

Today I met with Glen Morrison, president of local Steelworkers union 1330 from Abitibi Consolidated and the Kenora mill. The future of this mill is at stake, as are jobs in the community. In fact, this is such an important issue that this delegation is here at Queen's Park for the week. I'd like to inform you of how your minister's recent announcement, the one you just alluded to, has been received by others in the sector. Cec Makowski of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union called the announcements "pathetically anemic" and "nowhere near what is required to turn the industry around." The Ontario Forest Industries Association said

that "critical core competitive issues are not addressed." Every day I read in the northern papers about another paper mill or mill shutting down in a small community. In my own riding, letters are pouring in from families who are in fear for their livelihoods.

Premier, the government's plan has lowered delivered wood costs by US\$1 per cubic metre; it's just not good enough. When is your government going to act on the recommendations of the expert council?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I marvel at this new alliance here. I wish them all the best, I really do. But let me tell you a bit more about our \$680-million strategy, in addition to that \$150-million forest sector prosperity fund. We have put in place \$28 million annually to help support the maintenance of primary access roads, which had been downloaded on to the sector by the NDP government. We're devoting \$10 million to an annual inventory program and \$1 million for an annual Ontario wood promotion program.

The first step was the loan guarantee program; the second step was our broader strategy. There's a third step, and it's an important one, and I'd ask my friend opposite to take up this cause as well. Now that we here, the taxpayers of Ontario, have put in place this plan, we are asking the federal government to come to the table and to match the support that we've put in place.

1530

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): My question is to the Premier, and it's a very simple one. You will know that post-Katrina, we saw gas prices shoot through the roof to almost \$1.50 a litre in some cases. I've got a simple question: Would you agree with me that there's been excessive profit-taking on the part of the gas industry in Ontario as well as in North America?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): Speaker, the Minister of Government Services.

Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services): Just to remind the House of the step we took, and I think it was the appropriate step: We notified the federal Competition Bureau of our serious concerns with what was happening with gas prices in the province of Ontario, where we saw dramatic changes in prices from area to area. We saw the price go down more quickly in other jurisdictions.

The member would be aware that the federal government has acknowledged that the Competition Bureau probably needs more teeth; they probably need some change in legislation; they probably need some tools to do a better job in dealing with this matter.

We, on behalf of the people of Ontario, took I think the appropriate step. The federal government has acknowledged that it needs to take some action, and I understand that they plan to do that.

Mr. Bisson: Listen, I've just got to say I'm hearing "tools"; I'm hearing "federal government"; I'm hearing everything. That wasn't the question.

My question to the Premier was a very simple one. People were being hosed at the pumps. They were paying as much as \$1.50 a litre for the best part of September, post-Katrina. I repeat my question to you, Minister: Do you agree with me that the gas companies across this country have been doing excessive profit-taking when it comes to the price of gas?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: I will repeat what I said earlier: The federal government has acknowledged that the Competition Bureau probably needs some additional teeth to deal with this matter, and that there may be some cases where the gas companies have not dealt fairly with this.

I'll tell you what we've done, but I'll tell you what we will not do. We won't do what you did when you were in office, and that is raise the gas taxes in the province of Ontario by 30%. That won't happen. We won't gouge the people of Ontario on gas taxes like you did in the time you were in office. That won't happen, for sure.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, earlier this year, you launched an employment support initiative called Jobs Now, an initiative that was piloted across Ontario, including the city of Ottawa. Jobs Now is a positive way to restore integrity to social assistance. I know that in my riding, where there are people on welfare who want to work, finding and keeping a job can be very difficult. I hope Jobs Now has changed that.

Minister, have there been improvements in aiding those on social assistance to find jobs through the JobsNow pilot? More specifically, has the pilot project in Ottawa seen people on social assistance gain employment?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): Thank you so much for this. I know you have a particular interest in the Ottawa area and in helping people who are on welfare return to work.

What was very special about this pilot that we launched last spring was that we focused on six areas—northern, rural, urban communities—where we could look at the kind of supports needed to move people back into the workforce, but we specifically targeted individuals who have been on the system for 12 months or more, what we would classify as “harder to serve” because they've been out of the workforce for so long.

We are very happy to see the preliminary responses. I am getting regular feedback from all six communities and will be happy to share a fulsome report in very short order, in particular for Ottawa. Both you and the mayor of Ottawa are very happy to see this renewed focus on making welfare a real program—not just workfare, which was a failure by the last government—that returns people, in fact, to working for a living, and assistance to move people into the workforce.

Mr. McNeely: Thank you, Minister. Your attitude toward those Ontarians who need help the most is quite refreshing.

We must never forget how important it is that we continue to help those who need it most. Minister, what plans does your ministry have to move forward with JobsNow?

Hon. Ms. Pupatello: As I mentioned earlier, we are looking for a very fulsome report of the program, which is to run up to 18 months or beyond to get some good results on that pilot, as it is operating in six different sites, including Ottawa.

I will tell you, though, that in addition what we are doing is looking at our programs, and with the help of our parliamentary assistant, Deb Matthews, who did a very good report on social assistance as it relates to employment especially, it has resulted in a significant decrease to the barriers that exist in the welfare system, things like the extension of our health benefits for a further six months as people move into the workplace, a significant barrier that the Conservatives put up that we are tearing down.

In addition, a special increase for the first time in 18 years in the child care component deductions for people moving into the workforce, from \$300 to \$600. In addition, a number of those barriers that we are targeting where we will say to people, “We know you need help getting back into the workforce, and we as a government are prepared to offer that assistance.”

PETITIONS

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr. Cameron Jackson (Burlington): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario has an inconsistent policy for access to new cancer treatments while these drugs are under review for funding; and

“Whereas cancer patients taking oral chemotherapy may apply for a section 8 exception under the Ontario drug benefit plan with no such exception policy in place for intravenous cancer drugs administered in hospital; and

“Whereas this is an inequitable, inconsistent and unfair policy, creating two classes of cancer patients with further inequities on the basis of personal wealth and the willingness of hospitals to risk budgetary deficits to provide new intravenous chemotherapy treatments; and

“Whereas cancer patients have the right to the most effective care recommended by their doctors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to provide immediate access to Velcade and other intravenous chemotherapy while these new cancer drugs are under review and provide a consistent policy for access to new cancer treatments that enables oncologists to apply for exceptions to meet the needs of patients.”

This petition has my signature and support.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that was signed by dozens of people who were at a rally for autism that I spoke at this morning in Sarnia, and I want to read it into the record. It says:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas children with autism who have reached the age of six years are no longer being discharged from their preschool autism program; and

“Whereas these children should be getting the best special education possible in the form of applied behaviour analysis (ABA) within the school system; and

“Whereas there are approximately 700 preschool children with autism across Ontario who are required to wait indefinitely for placement in the program, and there are also countless school-age children that are not receiving the support they require in the school system; and

“Whereas this situation has an impact on the families, extended families and friends of all of these children; and

“Whereas, as stated on the Web site for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, ‘IBI can make a significant difference in the life of a child with autism. Its objective is to decrease the frequency of challenging behaviours, build social skills and promote language development’;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of IBI for all preschool children awaiting services. We also petition the Legislature of Ontario to fund an education program in the form of ABA in the school system.”

Clearly, I agree with the petitioners. I’ve affixed my signature to this.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): I have a petition regarding Credit Valley Hospital capital improvements.

“Whereas on August 22, 2005, the government of Ontario, through the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Public Infrastructure Renewal, announced that the Credit Valley Hospital’s phase 2 expansion project will proceed, with construction starting in 2007; and

“Whereas the new A and H blocks at Credit Valley Hospital will dramatically improve service and care to the approximately 4,800 babies delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital, improving a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

“Whereas the expanded capacity will expedite the movement of acutely ill admitted emergency patients on to a nursing unit where they will be cared for in a timely and professional manner, decrease wait times for surgical patients requiring in-patient care, and also motivate local donors to support our community’s hospital;

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

“That the Credit Valley Hospital, its staff, patients, donors and community thank the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Public Infrastructure Renewal

for the government of Ontario’s solid commitment to the care and well-being of the growing municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital in western Mississauga.”

I’ve affixed my signature as well, Mr. Speaker.

1540

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I won the lottery.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

“Whereas quality supports are dependent upon the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

“Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector, to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community.”

This is signed by many of my constituents. I affix my signature as well and give it to Trevor.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition signed by hundreds of people from Guelph, Cambridge and Kitchener against P3 hospitals. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas all hospitals since the inception of public medicare in Canada have been non-profit;

“Whereas ‘public-private partnership’ (P3) hospitals turn over democratic community control to international investors, making a public service into a commodity sold for profit;

“Whereas worldwide evidence is that private (P3) hospitals lead to doctor, nurse, staff and bed cuts in hospitals in order to make room for profit taking, consultant fees, higher borrowing costs and outrageous executive salaries;

“Whereas private (P3) hospitals hide information about the use of tax dollars by claiming ‘commercial secrecy’ when they privatize public institutions;

“Whereas the higher costs, user fees, two-tier services and culture of private (P3) hospitals risk the future sustainability of our public medicare system;

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

“We call on the government of Ontario to stop all current and future ‘public-private partnership’ (P3) hospital deals and return full ownership, operation, management and delivery of hospital services to non-profit hands, and develop a plan to fund new hospitals through public finance, clearly excluding the privatization of hospital services.”

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

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I have the pleasure today to introduce a petition on behalf of Ms. Franca Mancini, who lives at 29 Bowman Street in Georgetown, Ontario.

“Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly:

“Credit Valley Hospital Capital Improvements

“Whereas on August 22, 2005, the government of Ontario, through the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Public Infrastructure Renewal, announced that the Credit Valley Hospital’s phase 2 expansion project will proceed, with construction starting in 2007; and

“Whereas the new A and H blocks at Credit Valley Hospital will dramatically improve service and care to the approximately 4,800 babies delivered each year at the Credit Valley Hospital, improving a facility designed to handle 2,700 births annually; and

“Whereas the expanded capacity will expedite the movement of acutely ill admitted emergency patients on to a nursing unit where they will be cared for in a timely and professional manner, decrease wait times for surgical patients requiring in-patient care, and also motivate local donors to support our community’s hospital;

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

“That the Credit Valley Hospital, its staff, patients, donors and community thank the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Public Infrastructure Renewal for the government of Ontario’s solid commitment to the care and well-being of the growing municipalities served by the Credit Valley Hospital in western Mississauga.”

QUEENSWAY CARLETON HOSPITAL

Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton): I have been getting literally hundreds of petitions every week which read as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Queensway Carleton Hospital is one of the most efficient hospitals in the country;

“Whereas the Queensway Carleton Hospital’s priority should be providing excellent patient care, not money for Paul Martin’s Liberal government;

“Whereas the number of senior citizens served by the Queensway Carleton Hospital is growing rapidly in the west end of Ottawa and Nepean;

“Whereas the federal Liberal government led by Paul Martin has a surplus potentially as high as \$10 billion;

“Whereas all provincial political parties in Ontario have acknowledged the significant fiscal imbalance;

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

“The Ontario Legislature call upon the federal Liberal government to immediately cancel its plans to dramatically increase the rent for the land now being used by the Queensway Carleton Hospital, and that the hospital be charged only \$1 rent per year.”

I am pleased to support and sign this petition.

OPTOMETRISTS

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition that’s been signed by dozens of constituents in my riding that reads as follows:

“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 society are able to receive the eye care 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 agree with the petitioners. I’ve affixed my signature to this.

PERMIS POUR LA VENTE DE BOISSONS ALCOOLIQUES

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): J’ai une pétition provenant de quatre communautés dans la municipalité de La Nation.

« À l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario:

« Attendu que les résidents de St-Bernardin, Fournier, St-Isidore et Riceville dans la municipalité de La Nation, comptant environ 11 000 habitants (villages et rurales), ne sont desservis que par trois dépanneurs sur une grande superficie de territoire en campagne;

« Attendu que les résidents doivent parcourir plusieurs kilomètres afin de s’approvisionner d’une bonne bouteille de vin et/ou de bière puisque cette marchandise n’est disponible que dans les grandes villes éloignées telles que Alexandria et/ou Vankleek Hill;

« Nous, les soussignés, présentons la pétition suivante à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Que le bureau des liqueurs de l'Ontario émette un permis pour la vente de bières et de vin au dépanneur Méthot-Leroux situé au 117 rue de l'Église, St-Bernardin, Ontario. »

J'y ajoute ma signature.

HIGHWAY 26

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 was approved by MPP Jim Wilson and the previous PC government in 2000; and

“Whereas a number of horrific fatalities and accidents have occurred on the old stretch of Highway 26; and

“Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 is critical to economic development and job creation in Simcoe–Grey;

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

“That the Liberal government stop the delay of the Highway 26 redevelopment and act immediately to ensure that the project is finished on schedule, to improve safety for area residents and provide economic development opportunities and job creation in Simcoe–Grey.”

Obviously I agree with the petition and I've signed it.

GASOLINE PRICES

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition about gas prices, which reads as follows:

“Whereas the average price of gasoline has skyrocketed to over \$1 a litre, the highest price at the pumps in Ontario history;

“Whereas high gas prices are causing great hardship for ordinary motorists, small business owners and industry;

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals promised to take action to keep gas prices low;

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have broken that promise and have done nothing to help ordinary families getting hosed at the pumps;

“We petition the Ontario government to immediately pass Bill 74, the Keep Your Promises at the Pump Act, which would make the Liberals keep their promise to freeze gas prices for 90 days, and Bill 93, the Keep Your Promise on the Gas Price Watchdog Act, which would force the Liberals to keep their promise to establish a gas price watchdog to protect consumers from price gouging.”

I agree with the petitioners. I've affixed my signature to this.

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“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 free time and in their home communities; and

“Whereas the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association has declared their intent to ‘phase out’ these double-hatter firefighters; and

“Whereas double-hatter firefighters are being threatened by the union leadership and forced to resign as volunteer firefighters or face losing their full-time jobs, and this is weakening volunteer fire departments in Ontario; and

“Whereas Waterloo—Wellington MPP Ted Arnott has introduced Bill 52, the Volunteer Firefighters Employment Protection Act, that would uphold the right to volunteer and solve this problem concerning public safety in Ontario;

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

“That the provincial government express public support for MPP Ted Arnott's Bill 52 and willingness to pass it into law or introduce similar legislation that protects the right of firefighters to volunteer in their home communities on their own free time.”

This is signed by a significant number of constituents from the Grey-Bruce area.

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QUEENSWAY CARLETON HOSPITAL

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have received a petition from concerned residents in Ottawa, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Queensway Carleton Hospital is one of the most efficient hospitals in the country;

“Whereas the Queensway Carleton Hospital's priority should be providing excellent patient care, not money for Paul Martin's Liberal government;

“Whereas the number of senior citizens served by the Queensway Carleton Hospital is growing rapidly in the west end of Ottawa and Nepean;

“Whereas the federal Liberal government led by Paul Martin has a surplus potentially as high as \$10 billion;

“Whereas all provincial political parties in Ontario have acknowledged the significant fiscal imbalance;

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

“We call on the federal Liberal government to immediately cancel its plans to dramatically increase the rent for the land now being used by the Queensway Carleton Hospital, and that the hospital be charged only \$1 rent per year.”

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on Thursday, October 13, 2005, on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to begin, as I did the other day—and I think it's appropriate in this debate—by extending a warm welcome to you, to congratulate you on your election to the Chair, and to extend my best wishes to all of our colleagues in all parties in this Legislature as we resume this new sitting of Parliament.

I would also like to thank His Honour for graciously opening this new legislative session. As for the content of the throne speech, I will be getting to that in more detail later, and I will have an amendment to move to the address in reply moved the other day. But we can certainly all agree that His Honour has set an outstanding example for this House and for Ontario generally, be it as an advocate for aboriginal literacy or be it as someone who is working hard to try to increase public information on mental health issues or a wide range of other issues. He remains a model of public service that I think we can all learn from.

Ontario remains a place of tremendous opportunity, a blessed place to live, especially when we see it against the backdrop of the trials and the tragedies that have happened elsewhere. Again, I would take a minute, as I did the other day, and join the leaders of the other parties in extending our condolences to the people in South Asian communities who have been the victims of the most recent tragedy we've seen this year, the earthquake that befell India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Kashmir. I've had a chance to be at some events in the community where there's a huge amount of fundraising taking place, proving yet again the generosity that people have toward their neighbours, whether those neighbours live here or elsewhere. I'd repeat the idea I put forward the other day that the Ontario government consider a challenge grant that would match the donations of Ontarians in the third week after the federal challenge grant has run out, and look at that as a means of making sure we keep the interest high and raise as much money as we can.

These days, it's popular to cast Alberta as the major engine of Canadian prosperity. To that, I've always said, when I've been asked about it—as recently as last week—that right here in Ontario we have a prosperity creation machine that is every bit the match of anything else in Canada and is every bit the match, for that matter, of anything else in the world. There are 12 and a half million people here. They are people who have within them an incredible amount of expertise in a whole host of

areas. We have an education infrastructure and an education system that people have been through, and continue to go through. We have a resource base. We have a strong farm economy, although it's suffering at the moment, and I'll come back to that. But we have a strong agricultural base and great agricultural traditions in this province to build on.

While I would argue that it's every bit as powerful as what we hear a lot about in terms of the present opportunities in front of the province of Alberta, I think it's also fair to say that our prosperity creation machine has more moving parts. It requires more care and attention and more repeated and constant tune-ups if it's to stay functioning well and do what it is capable of doing. The people who are in charge of this prosperity creation machine that we call Ontario have to be focused, they have to be committed, and they have to be credible.

Part of the care and attention that our province needs and deserves, I would argue, to maintain its prosperity must include care and attention to the real needs of real people who today face some very real problems in their daily lives. I would argue that today this kind of credible leadership is sorely lacking. Indeed, I would suggest to you that the Liberals now find themselves in the midst of a credibility crisis.

It is not my intention to speak any more than necessary today on the circumstances surrounding the resignation of the former Minister of Finance, who deserves the full benefit of the doubt as afforded by the law. I hope for his sake and for the sake of the entire process that his name is cleared, and that it is cleared soon. But I would say this to you: The fact remains that even before this latest fiasco hit the news last week, this government and this Premier had already established a reputation for unaccountable government that broke the promises it made and that refuses to take responsibility for its many mistakes. Again, we saw an example of that nowhere better than in question period just this afternoon. I am sad to say that nothing in this last week's throne speech changed that reputation, and nothing in that throne speech is going to change that reputation.

If you were paying attention to the din of the Liberal caucus patting themselves on the back, all the throne speech contained, when you really looked at it, were 60 recycled, unfulfilled promises from the past, and eight new promises—I'll give them that; there were eight new promises. Many of those involved setting up new bureaucracy and finding new ways to put more people in place to tell people what to do and how to live their lives out there. Several of them, frankly, seemed to be more PR gimmicks than real, smart public policy that was really going to help us keep that prosperity going in the province of Ontario. Even the Premier himself, in speaking to the media, referred to them as "novelty" items. That's what he called them. He said the speech would have some novelty items in it—hardly the stuff that is going to help us build a province; hardly the stuff that is going to help people who are working harder and falling further behind at one and the same time. They don't need

novelty items. They need real help for real problems that real people face out there, and they did not get it from this government.

The very same throne speech commits to not less than five new levels of bureaucracy that will surely cost millions of more taxpayer dollars. I've travelled this province. I have been to 101 out of 103 constituencies in Ontario. I can assure you that in all of those travels I have heard people ask for lots of things—they've suggested lots of things the government should be doing in order to help them with their lives—and not once did I hear anybody ask for more layers of bureaucracy at a cost of hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars of the taxpayers' money that belongs to and was earned by those very same people I was talking to.

So we did hear about the bureaucracy. We did hear about the novelty items and the gimmicks. What we did not hear in the throne speech was any kind of meaningful plan. There were no elements whatsoever of a meaningful plan to help the working families that are hurting right now.

Ontarians are hard-working people. They're smart people. They understand what it means to save, just to cite one example. Today, thousands of Ontario families are saving to send their kids to college. They're saving up for a family vacation they might take during the spring break next year. They're saving up for new clothes for the kids or repairs to the car. Some families may be saving for their first home or saving to fix the home that they already have. For years and years, hundreds and thousands of Ontario families have been saving up for a rainy day because they know—and it's part of what has made Ontario great; it's part of the values that we share—that saving up for a rainy day is the smart thing to do.

Today, the money these families have saved, the money they first worked hard to earn and then saved for the rainy day, that money is going to Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal government. That's where that money is going. It is going this Liberal government to spend and to waste and to throw at new programs and layers of bureaucracy—in particular, the latter—with zero accountability and zero planning. It's the worst possible thing that could happen to that money, to have it go from the hard workers who earned it to just be wasted and frittered away on these kinds of programs.

It's paying for the new bureaucracy. It's paying—because sometimes people understand the smaller stuff a little better—to spend \$1,000 to send a few bags of ice from Toronto down to Niagara Falls. It's paying for the 16 people who accompanied the Premier of this province from Toronto to Niagara Falls for our Premiers' meeting. So they're seeing it pay for a new bureaucracy, bags of ice, and 16 people going with the Premier of Ontario to a Premiers' meeting. Of course, we know what else it's paying for: It's going to pay the health tax.

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For the families paying higher electricity rates, with more electricity price increases on the way, the rainy day

is here. For the people who are paying twice as much in dollars in health tax this year as they did last year, the rainy day is here. For the families who will face higher home heating bills this winter, for the families that rely on a car to get to work or to get their kids to school and for the families facing the record gas prices that were discussed in this House this afternoon, the rainy day is here. For the families paying higher user fees imposed by this McGuinty Liberal government, for the families paying higher property taxes because of the inaction of this government and their so-called new municipal partnership program—which shafts municipalities right across the province, and by so doing, will shaft taxpayers right across this province—and for taxpayers who are forced to dig into their pockets to pay for their eye examinations, to pay for their visits to chiropractors and to pay for physiotherapy, the rainy day is here.

For all of those taxpayers, for all of those families, this money is going to a Premier who broke his promises to Ontarians, to a government that has proven that it cannot be trusted. There is absolutely no reason, I would argue, why anything that is found in this throne speech should be believed—not a word of it—because when we look back at what they said they would do and what they promised they would do, whether it was in their platform or in a previous throne speech, there is hardly anything there where they've done what they said they would do. Their word is just not to be trusted. Take, for example, page 4 of their election platform, where the Premier said that a Liberal government, if elected, would “give you better value for your money, while keeping taxes down.”

I heard about this loud and clear when I was running in the by-election campaign last March in Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey. Voters on the doorstep told me time and time again—and it hasn't been confined to that, nor has it stopped there, because ever since then, as I've traveled across the province from constituency to constituency, town to town, county to county, city to city, they've told me over and over again, in almost the same words, “I'm getting 1.5%, 2%, 2.5% at work, and then I come home after a hard day's work and find my hydro bill there, and it's up 6%, 7%, 8%. I come home at the end of a hard day's work and I find my property tax bill there, and it's up 6%, 7% or 8%. I fill out my income tax return at the end of April, and I find there's this health tax there and that I'm going to have to pay twice as much when I fill it out in April 2006 as I did in April 2005.”

They all basically have the same question. They pose it to me because I'm standing there, but it's really a question they're posing more to this government than they are to me, which is: “How are we expected to cope? How are we supposed to cope? How's our family going to cope” with getting 2% and having bills that arrive for 6%, 7% and 8%—not just one—and most of them, in some way or another, under the control of this McGuinty Liberal government?

Those people, who are working so hard each and every day going off to do whatever they do, looked to the throne speech for the smallest indication, even the

smallest glimmer of hope, that this McGuinty Liberal government recognized what they're going through, recognized that they are having trouble keeping up. They would hope that the Liberals might recognize that even the tiniest little bit of help might be welcome, both as a sign of recognition that they know people are struggling but also as a tangible way of helping Ontarians. They recognize as well, and they hoped the throne speech would address this, that a part of the care and attention that the province of Ontario needs if it's going to be well run, if it's being to be prosperous, if it's going to be successful—a part of the care and attention that I mentioned earlier that Ontario needs to have on an ongoing basis—is care and attention to helping Ontarians cope to keep this province strong.

Any person who's trying to cope out there, I would argue, would be deeply disappointed when they watched this throne speech. What was in it for them? What was in it for the real lives of the real people who have real problems and who need real help and real results today? What was in it for them? They got absolutely nothing.

The Premier and his Liberal Party just don't understand how hard these Ontario families are finding it to get by and how much some help, any help, would mean to them as they go about trying to live their lives on a day-to-day basis.

So what might have been in the throne speech for these Ontario families? What might have been there?

Let's start with energy rebates. This government, the McGuinty Liberal government, has \$500 million sitting in its coffers booked as energy rebates that are owed to the people of Ontario for a year that ended quite a few months ago. That money is sitting in their accounts. We heard last week from the new Minister of Energy—God bless her—that there are some accounting issues that prevent that money from being sent out.

Well, I will say that one thing that should have been in the throne speech, and the Premier of this province, Mr. McGuinty, should have put it there: He should have said that those cheques will be mailed out and in the homes across this province, that people will have that money by October 31, no ifs, ands or buts about it. That's all there is to it.

Accounting issues are no excuse when it comes to returning to people their own money that the government is holding on to. Frankly, since they've delayed and delayed, obfuscated and got themselves wound up in endless bureaucracy with this money, they should be returning it, with interest, from the end of the fiscal year last year.

Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean–Carleton): Hear, hear. And an apology.

Mr. Tory: And an apology. My friend from Nepean–Carleton is absolutely right: There should be an apology.

But the fact is, people will say, "Well, you know, it really doesn't matter that much. It would have only been, say, \$100 per family." Well, at this stage both the tangible help of \$100 a family and just the smallest recognition that that would have provided, had they put it

in the throne speech, that Ontario's families are suffering, would have made a difference. For example, it would have paid for just a small portion of the double health tax whammy that people are facing across this province, courtesy of this Premier and this Liberal government, who hold on to their money and sit and hoard it in a bank account when people need that money across this province, and they need it today.

How about property assessments? Seniors and families, people who have often owned the same home, the same farm, for many, many years are getting notices in the mail now, and they're seeing their assessments go up 40%, 50% and 60%. It's unpredictable and it's arbitrary and it's unfair. The Premier of the province says he won't deal with it because, and I quote, "He didn't run on it." Well, I ask the Premier of this province—and he's not here, but through you, Mr. Speaker—did he run on a health tax? Did he run on consciously ignoring each and every year his own commitment to balance the budget? Did he run on delisting chiropractic services, physiotherapy and eye examinations? Did he run on any of these things?

Interjections: No.

Mr. Tory: He didn't run on any of these things.

He can find some time. He could find some time right now, and he could have found a couple of lines in the throne speech to say that he was going to take the opportunity to review the impact that this is all having on people, especially those with fixed incomes, with catastrophic assessment increases.

How about the whole business of who does what between the municipal and provincial governments? That might have helped people struggling to pay huge increases that are taking place in their property taxes. AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, in commenting on the throne speech said that there is no hope as a result of this throne speech of "fiscally sustainable municipal government."

We hear this government repeat over and over and over again, one minister, one member after another, that this is a problem they inherited from the previous government. We heard it today with respect to garbage. You know what? I say this, and the people of Ontario are on to this: This government has now been in office for more than two years. They have had every opportunity, including most recently their own throne speech brought in to this House last week, to say whatever they wanted on any issue they wanted. They could have set out some plan they had to get people to formulate their own plans on garbage. They could have said something meaningful on crime—I'll come back to that—and they could have said, "It's time to review the allocation of responsibilities between the provincial and the municipal governments to make sure that we have it right."

Whatever was said about revenue neutrality and whatever revenue-neutral intentions may have existed at the time that responsibilities were reallocated, they are far from a reality today. I've said this many times. We would give Ontarians the facts of what had happened in

the 10 years since those responsibilities were reallocated and then act on those facts. And at the very least as well, if that had been contained in this throne speech, it would have provided a glimmer of hope to property taxpayers, because that's part of what's causing them to have trouble coping.

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Why don't we talk about the health tax for a minute? You remember what a prominent part that played in the platform of the Liberal Party at the time of the last election. It was right there, front and center: "We're going to impose the single, biggest tax increase in the history of Ontario, we're going to make sure it's as regressive as possible and we're really going to stick it to people."

This past spring, by the admission of the former Minister of Finance in his most recent statement, this Liberal government under Mr. McGuinty's leadership found, in essence, a billion dollars in the cushions of their various chesterfields. They were kind of searching about there, doing whatever they were doing, and found, in their collective couches, a billion dollars. You could otherwise say they found it in their pants pocket. They just found this money.

I remember watching with great hilarity the Minister of Finance saying they found this extra money—that windfall—that frankly came from, and should have been the subject of a big thank you to, hard-working people and hard-working companies across Ontario. That's where the money came from. I remember watching with hilarity the former Minister of Finance saying it came as a result of his good management. Well, I call it good luck, or I call it good work by Ontario taxpayers, but most certainly not good management on the part of this government. They wouldn't know good management if they fell over it. It does not take an accounting degree to link the government's extra revenues with their record health tax. That's where the money came from—a billion dollars extra.

If, as a result of that windfall, that good fortune, they had said, "We're going to take the opportunity, because we have a billion dollars extra that we didn't expect, that we found in the cushions of the couch, that we found it in our pants pocket"—even if they wanted to say "by good management," I wouldn't have cared if they had followed that up by saying, "We're going to balance the books a little faster than the schedule we laid out." Of course, even the schedule they've laid out today is way outside of what they said they would do when they were campaigning for public office in 2003.

If they had said that they were going to apply that extra billion dollars toward making sure the debt didn't grow and debt interest charges didn't rise, we might have said, "Do you know what? That's not so bad." Had they offered to return some of this money to the Ontario families who earned it and whom they hit with this new tax, we might have agreed with that. Had they kept their own election commitments—again, go back to their platform document, which said, "We will live by the

balanced-budget law." And they also said, "We will make sure the debt goes in one direction only: down." If they had done that—taken some of that money and either applied it to reducing the deficit a bit faster than their schedule or given some of it back to Ontario taxpayers—they certainly would have been shielded from criticism.

That is why, when they said the direction of the debt would only be down, that they would abide by the balanced-budget law and didn't, the word of this Premier and this government mean nothing. There is promise after promise, commitment after commitment like that made in their own platform, in previous throne speeches and so on that have been completely dishonoured by this government, because they, as well as everybody else, have obviously decided that their word really doesn't mean anything. To me, it is also pretty fundamental to the care and attention Ontario needs, in order to stay prosperous and strong, to have a government whose leadership understands and thinks every day that his word and their word does mean something. It means everything in terms of the kind of credibility he has when he goes, on our behalf, to meetings around this country or within this province, or sits down with anybody in talks about anything.

You know, they sat around and decided how to cut up the cash when it came to the extra billion dollars they found. Yet, as they sat and did that—I understand they had caucus meetings over the course of the summer, and they were told, long before the rest of us knew, that they were going to have a one-time-only \$1-billion windfall: "What do you want to do with it? How do you want to spend it? It's the only chance you're going to get." They sat at their retreats and had discussions about how to spend this money, how to cut up the cash, as it were, like it was a lottery winning they were going to just take on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario and blow for political purposes.

In the meantime, the debt, which they said would only go one direction, down, rises and the debt interest charges rise to the point where by 2007—and we'll be reminding the people of this when we get to the election campaign—the debt interest charges being paid by those very same hard-working families in this province will be equal to the entire budget of the Ministry of Education. Let me pause for a moment and repeat that to the hard-working people watching at home: By 2007, thanks to the profligacy and irresponsibility of this government, which is adding every hour of every day to the debt of this government, they are going to make sure the debt interest charges are equal to the entire amount we spend on the Ministry of Education—

Mr. Baird: Shame.

Mr. Tory: —and that, as the member for Nepean-Carleton says, is shameful.

Interjection.

Mr. Tory: My friend from across the way seems to be having trouble containing himself. We'll come back to him later, because his tenure as Minister of Agriculture was nothing short of shameful in terms of the inattention to the—

Interjection.

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour will come to order.

The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Tory: We have an extra billion dollars found in the cushions of the chesterfield and nothing but additional spending on political boondoggles of one kind or another to show for it: nothing done for the deficit, not a penny given back to the taxpayers, not even the tiniest gesture of recognition given to the people of Ontario that this McGuinty Liberal government understands they are struggling and having trouble coping. They just had the meetings to cut up the cash.

Do you know what it comes down to? It comes down to a complete lack of respect for the people who earned that money: hard-working businesses and farmers and taxpayers. It comes down to a lack of respect for whose money it is. It is not the money of the Liberal caucus to cut up, like some kind of winning lottery ticket, and spend on political boondoggles. It comes down, at the end of the day, to no respect for the fact that too many taxpayers are having trouble making ends meet. They don't recognize it, they don't respect it, they don't do anything about it, and that is why their throne speech said not a word that will provide any help to those people who are struggling today.

That's why we reject that throne speech and why we'll be moving an amendment at the end of these remarks to say that we reject it, because what it is is the same old tax-and-spend approach, the same old tax-and-spend approach. It's all they know how to do. The taxpayers, to them, are not people to be respected; they're not people to whom to be accountable. They are just an ATM: Any time you run out of money, don't even bother sticking in the card; just stick it to them and get more money to finance your political boondoggles.

Outside of this House, there is a real world with real people facing real problems looking for real help and real results. I regret to inform you, Mr. Speaker, that this throne speech had nothing for them.

It is key that to build more prosperity, to create and maintain jobs for the children and grandchildren of those here and of everybody in Ontario, to pay for world-class health and education and provide real support for people in need, we need to have a strong economy. A strong economy is a function of many things but includes, in particular, the overall investment climate. Building a strong economy requires disciplined management of government finances, not this kind of boondoggling, spend-it-all, "the more you can find to spend, the more you should spend" approach taken by the Liberals, because people out there understand. They understand it from their personal lives. We understand that today's deficit and debt are tomorrow's taxes. Today's deficit and debt are tomorrow's taxes.

A strong economy requires a smart regulatory environment.

Interjection.

Mr. Tory: We're on to you now. We're on to your new portfolio. I hate to say it: God knows what you can

do in this one. But you know, just speaking about the regulatory environment that will encourage investment, your predecessor over there brought in a piece of labour legislation that was, if ever there was one, a solution in search of a problem. You took a secret ballot, the most democratic and open thing—open in the sense that everybody knows what the rules are; they all know how it works. We all know; it's what we use for elections. You took that and decided you had a better idea. It was working. There were no complaints about it. There were no complaints, but no, no, no, you and your predecessors and all of you over there had a much better idea of a solution in search of a problem.

Environmental laws, which are not firm and balanced at one and the same time—they have already succeeded in chasing jobs out of this province from the Sarnia-Lambton area, where they said directly that jobs left this province on account of the reverse onus you put on the people, contrary to all the values we believe in in the justice and regulatory system in this province.

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Building a competitive economic climate is more important than ever. It requires that we keep our regulations competitive, it requires that we keep the business climate competitive and it requires that we keep our taxes competitive, and a lot more things beyond that. A competitive climate for investment requires certainty, it requires predictability, and it requires stability. None of this is achieved by making up policy on the fly. None of this is achieved by punishing working families with \$2,000 a year more each in additional taxes when this Premier, Mr. McGuinty, ran on the platform of not increasing taxes. Instead, not only does he not keep his word; he punishes Ontario families to the extent of \$2,000 each. What kind of predictability, what kind of stability, what kind of certainty, what kind of integrity is that? None of this kind of certainty or predictability or stability is achieved by punishing businesses, big and small, with billions of dollars in payroll tax increases, the most recent of which is the WSIB premium increase imposed on the businesses of Ontario.

Why should anybody in Ontario, when it comes to this throne speech, believe anything that this Premier has written on those pages read by the Lieutenant Governor when their record is clear? Their record is clear on every account—every account.

I didn't get time to ask today about a public inquiry into legionnaires' disease. This is the government that asked for, I think the number is, 153 public inquiries when they were in opposition; Mr. McGuinty himself asked for 29. He said that the very reason they needed to have them was because only with a public inquiry do you get the kind of transparency and openness where you can get answers for people who have fallen victim to terrible things that happen in our society. Many of the 29 public inquiries Mr. McGuinty asked for during his tenure as Leader of the Opposition didn't involve any loss of life whatsoever. In this case, we have 17 elderly people who died in one week. This is another example: Say one thing

when are you in opposition—29 times a public inquiry is needed—but do another when you get into government.

The Premier half-heartedly apologizes for breaking his word, not once, not twice—50 times, actually—but he apologized with respect to the biggest one; namely, his promise not to increase taxes. Yet you really know you've got a problem with somebody when they half-heartedly apologize and grudgingly force out of themselves an admission that this was wrong, that he broke his word.

But you know what? He's still at it. In the face of tough economic times, weeks ago they brought in huge increases in taxes—because what are these payments that are made to the WSIB, these payroll taxes and so on? They're just taxes. You can call them all kinds of names. Call them whatever you want, but the bottom line is, he's still at it. In tough economic times, no consideration of any relief whatsoever for hardworking families; no consideration of just leaving business people alone when they need to have a competitive tax regime, when they need to have a reasonable kind of regulatory climate; no consideration whatsoever, for example, to phasing out a little faster when they found the billion dollars in the chesterfield cushions. Why wouldn't they have said, "Maybe a little bit of that could go to phase out the capital tax a bit faster"? Because there's a tax—not a lot of people understand it; it's easy to villainize the people who pay it and say they should be paying more. This government has followed on the policy of the previous government and said that the capital tax should be phased out over a period of time. So if you have a billion dollars that you found, why wouldn't you take just a little bit of it and maybe say, "Fine, we'll speed that up because that's going to help bring about new investment in the province of Ontario"?

Unfortunately, the results of this growing competitive gap are becoming very clear. First of all, over the course of this year—just so far this year—Ontario has lost 43,000 manufacturing jobs, 43,000 manufacturing jobs lost so far. Secondly, for five months this year and for the first time since the end of World War II, Ontario's unemployment rate actually exceeded the national average. That's the first time since the end of the Second World War that that has happened. These are disturbing numbers and disturbing trends, and yet what we have in the face of that is old Premier "Don't worry; be happy" himself saying, "Why do you people trouble yourself with these things? Why do you trouble yourself with the fact that the border may be closed any day to the garbage and we're not working on a plan; we're just assuming somebody else is doing it? Why do you trouble yourself with the summer of crime that has taken place, not just in Toronto, but principally here and in other communities across the province? We had a couple of press conferences; what more do you expect? Why do you trouble yourself with the fact that 43,000 jobs have been lost in this province—manufacturing jobs? Why do you trouble yourself with the fact that the unemployment rate is above the national average several months in a row for the first time since World War II?"

These are disturbing numbers. Ontario has traditionally been the economic engine of the entire country. I started off by saying today that I believe we have an economic engine here that is the rival of any other that will ever exist in Canada, and well we should keep it that way. Well we should keep it that way that we have an economic engine that does it our way with manufacturing and resources and farming and the service economy and the financial services industry, and on and on it goes. We have the biggest population base in the country. We have one of the world's most diversified and highly skilled workforces, and yet there is evidence coming up, time after time, that we're starting to fall behind.

I don't blame the Premier for all of the challenges that we face as a province. Certainly he doesn't set the value of the Canadian dollar. But I do lay at his doorstep, and I lay at the doorstep of the Liberal Party under Mr. McGuinty's leadership, the fact that he developed and personally initiated the taxes that he stuck Ontario taxpayers and businesses with, as well as the new regulations and the new labour laws and the complete and total insensitivity to the struggles of small businesses, entrepreneurs, individuals, farmers and others right across this province.

I would argue that this throne speech was the latest sad chapter in this Liberal government's sad record of more taxes, more regulations, more laws, none of which do anything to help foster that investment climate that we need so much to cause people to take risks, to invest in Ontario, to create jobs here and to produce the kinds of revenues that we need in order to finance the things that we cherish so much: health care, education and other help for people. There is no help for real people or real businesses with real problems. There is no help for families who need real help and still have not received any from this Premier and from this Liberal Party. Meaningful commitments on the economy—go back and read through it—were largely absent from this government's throne speech. The last thing we needed to hear was a commitment to establish a new layer of bureaucracy—not just one; quite a few of them—and yet this new research and innovation council is their answer to economic development and improving the investment climate and encouraging people to create and maintain jobs in Ontario.

I've travelled to 101—I've never thought of this, but maybe in the two ridings I've missed, that's where all the people are who are saying, "You know what we need? You know what we need to help us create jobs in Ontario, to help us cope with all the ever-increasing taxes this government has put on us, to help us cope with the struggles of looking after our families? We need a research and innovation council." It could be in those two ridings. I'm going to have to get myself to those two right away, but I doubt that's what I'm going to find when I get there.

The throne speech also included the often repeated, especially under this government, over and over again—we've heard them, in two years, promise 20 times to

speed up regulatory approvals for foreign-trained professionals. You might remember the promise, Mr. Speaker, because it was in the platform and it was in the last speech from the throne, two years ago. They're hoping we all forget, especially the hard-working people who have come to this country with a skill set. They're hoping that those people forget they promised to do something about this two years ago and they failed to keep their promises then. I have no idea why any of these people anywhere in Ontario who came from anywhere in the world with any skill would believe a word of what is in this document that we saw last week.

Entire sectors of our economy were left right out of this throne speech: agriculture, forestry, manufacturing.

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): They were not.

Mr. Tory: My friend across says, "They were not." It was the most appalling claptrap put in about these things. It was statements of good intention and claimed credit for things not done; it was unbelievable. Again, go out and ask a farmer, "What was in that throne speech for you?" Survey any number of farmers you want and say, "Were you really happy about all the stuff you got in the throne speech?" Ask anyone. Ask any of them.

There are some long-term investments contemplated in the throne speech, but if you're looking for real help for the real problems of today, don't look in this document because you won't find it. Creating and maintaining jobs is the most important economic priority of any government. That's because the people we represent—our kids, their kids, their grandchildren—need those jobs. They need those jobs because we all want to work and make a productive contribution. But it's also because more jobs means more money for the government. A simple 1% growth in this province's GDP would translate into \$615 million in additional revenue in the year that it occurred, and ultimately, if it was carried on, year after year, would result in billions more in revenue for the government; 1% increase in the growth carried on and sustained over a period of time. Think of the difference that would make in terms of our ability to do some of the things we've talked about today.

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Conversely, the more than 40,000 manufacturing jobs that have disappeared on this government's watch this year, those 43,000 jobs alone have cost the treasury or will cost the treasury upwards of \$103 million in taxes that won't be paid because those people are not working. That's based on average wages in average manufacturing jobs times the 43,000 people who aren't working in those manufacturing jobs today. That includes as well the fact that those people won't be paying the Premier's famous or infamous health tax because they're not going to be working.

Moving on—

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): How are you going to pay for those new drugs?

Mr. Tory: How am I going to pay for those drugs? Good question. I will say to you, through you, Mr. Speaker, that if you had just the smallest iota of attention to creating more jobs and creating that extra 1% of economic growth in this province, that would pay for all of those drugs and more. Instead, what you do is you do anything—\$615 million. Just leave the people in place who were working in those 43,000 jobs, including manufacturing jobs in your constituency, and those people would be paying the money to this government to pay for the drugs you talked about.

You are totally asleep at the switch over there when it comes to the economy of this province. Jobs are not coming here, jobs are not staying here, and that is your responsibility and it is at your doorstep.

I don't know how you have the temerity—never mind. It's not even worth it. It is just so sad, it's not even worth it.

Interjections.

The Speaker: It's time to remind everyone that only one member has the floor at a time and that in respect for that member, we will yield the floor to him. The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Tory: Since the government House leader and Minister of Tourism talked about health care, let's move on to talk about that for a minute. I will begin with this fundamental truth about the file. It's a hard file; it's probably the hardest file in all of government. Building a world-class health system, however, requires you to be bold. There are a lot of entrenched interests in the health care debate and a lot of political pressure not to act at all, just to sort of leave things as they are and keep shovelling more money into it and hope for the best. So we all sit and watch money wasted, money that could go to better patient care, but it's not because we focus on how much we're spending as opposed to how well we're spending it and what we're getting for the money that we're spending. Judging by the text of the throne speech, the McGuinty Liberals have not learned about this. They feel the ultimate test really just is, how much do you spend, how much do you do, as opposed to what kind of outcomes you are getting.

The major commitment in health care in this throne speech is to establish—guess what? It's something I've heard about every stop I've made across the province: "We need more bureaucrats at the Ministry of Health. We think the establishment of this Soviet-style central command and control is really going to be the answer to help us get better value for the health care money." People have been coming up to me—I'm thinking of asking for security because there are so many people who come up to me and say, "Why won't you get up and support the establishment of those levels of bureaucracy that the McGuinty Liberals are trying so hard to establish in this province?" It's unbelievable. Well, I tell you what: There isn't one of them who thinks they need that bureaucracy. There isn't one who has come up and said they need it. There is a lot who say they don't need it. And that's all these people are doing with respect to trying to bring about better health care.

What they need is not more bureaucrats. They don't need more bureaucrats. They need more nurses, more doctors and more health professionals on the front lines and at the bedside. What do we see? We see them firing 1,000 nurses—how much was it?—\$91 million allocated last year to fire the nurses, and yet the Minister of Health gets up and says regularly, “Oh, no. No nurses have been fired in this province.” He uses some clever words that say, “There have been none that have been paid severance” or something. The fact is they are out there, 1,200 other health professionals are out there. They have lost their jobs.

Ontarians have plenty of reason to be very suspicious, indeed, of the numbers of this Liberal government. Even the 3,000 nurses they just love to brag that they've hired, by the way, halfway through their term—better than halfway now and the target is 8,000. They are at 3,000, so heaven knows how we're going to get to the 8,000, but they're not even really at the 3,000. The fact is the people who have been hired—if they total 3,000 at all, which I doubt; these guys would round it up from 1,500 to 3,000 if they were given the choice—have been hired on short-term contract positions, not full-time, without job security, and in fact hospitals continue to lay off nurses to this day.

We could also look at wait times, which are a silent burden for every family living with a loved one requiring care. I'm delighted that the government shares the opposition's concern about health care wait times, but pay attention to what was actually said in the throne speech.

What was actually said? The speech praised the government. Some of those lavish pages of praise they forced the poor Lieutenant Governor to read lavished praise on this government for increasing the number of medical procedures that were taking place in Ontario.

Not once was there mentioned during the course of the speech where the wait times were today, where we wanted to get them to, or what the result of all these increased procedures was going to be in terms of what wait times are and what they should be; not once how much they should improve or what the target should be.

The speech did promise “unprecedented transparency” for wait time information, which, considering the Liberal government's record of absolute and total obstruction to date when it comes to making information available and the so-called transparency Mr. McGuinty called for when he became Premier, is not exactly going to be a hard promise for them to keep.

I stood the first day or second day I was here in this House and I asked the Premier a very straightforward question to which he should have had the answer, and that question was about lowering wait times. I said, “Well, if you are going to lower them, that's fine. We all support that. Where are you starting? What are the wait times the day you are starting to lower them, so that we can all measure how you're doing?” Do you know what? Both the minister and the Premier refused to answer that question. They refused to answer that question.

Mr. Baird: They didn't know; they couldn't.

Mr. Tory: I'm not sure. My friend from Nepean–Carleton says they didn't know. I'm not sure about that. I don't know whether they didn't know or if it just didn't suit them to answer the question.

The government promotes a new Web site coming in the next few days, and yet they don't highlight that they will shut down the old one that was very competently and objectively run by the orthopaedic doctors. It was a Web site that had existed for years. It had a modest amount of government funding. They ran it objectively, properly and competently, and we could see exactly how long people had to wait for those procedures. Why would they shut down the Web site that was objectively and properly and competently run by the orthopaedic surgeons and replace it with their own?

Well, you know why they are closing it down: because it was objective. It was actually run by somebody else, not the propaganda artists in the Premier's office who are going to run this new one. Objective measurements can't be altered. Objective people won't alter measurements. Those measurements cannot be manipulated for political gain, which is exactly what you are going to see, I guarantee it, with this new Web site. I guarantee that with this new Web site you're going to see political manipulation of the wait time data.

If this were a Progressive Conservative throne speech, we would have started with the real information, not an ever-changing yardstick designed to confuse. I would spend the time to have a real dialogue with people about the waste they see in the health care system.

When I was at the cardiology unit at Sunnybrook recently having a tour, they talked to me about some of the absolutely incredible un-businesslike decisions that are made in the health care system as a result of the policies of this government, policies that, frankly, in some cases have been in place for a long time.

In the emergency department at Sick Kids, front-line people and nurses said to me that there are decisions being made every day that result in far from the best use of the taxpayers' money when we are short of money. Front-line people see waste and duplication and dumb decisions. They see it. They know that what remains to be done in health care in terms of finding greater efficiencies isn't about communications advisers and bureaucrats. They know that it's time to have a real dialogue with them, an open dialogue, a real dialogue with the taxpayers of Ontario, to talk about the health care system, to talk about what they—meaning the front-line workers or the taxpayers—see and experience and how it could be made better.

For all the research and professional lobbying being done and all the focus groups you are having and all the other stuff, why don't we ask the front-line workers for the suggestions they have on how the health care system could be run better? And ask the people of Ontario, in an open discussion—an open discussion where you don't tell them what they can or can't say or what ideas they do or don't have.

If there were such an open discussion, I would ask about the possible role of risk-takers and innovators and idea people and their money in the current health care system, because we need them and their ideas at work, investing and innovating within a universal, single-payer system. Within a universal, single-payer system, we need the innovation and the ideas and the efficiencies and the investment of those people, without them being vilified, without even any discussion about what they might do to make our universal single-payer system better. We can still protect the principles of universality, but let's not be afraid to investigate improvements in efficiency, in innovation and in responsive service as well.

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For every Ontarian struggling on a wait list, for every family with a loved one in long-term care, for every patient now having to dig into their own pockets as a result of the policies of the McGuinty Liberals for eye care, physio or chiropractic services, the rainy day is now. Health care is just too important to reduce to empty jargon and meaningless declarations of victory. Until people start seeing improvements at the front line and at the bedside, it's too early to label it anything more than a work in progress. What this government wants to do is say, "Look. We've taken in all this money. It's a great thing. We've fixed health care." I can tell you from my travels around the province—and we had another example of that with the people who were here today. But you could bring people here every day, and if you asked them the question, as I do when I'm out there, as you could do if they were here, "Do you believe the health care in your community has improved on the watch of this government?" and, given the fact that you are paying billions more in your own taxes and that we're receiving as a province hundreds of millions of dollars more from the federal government, the answer would be an overwhelming no because the fact is, they can't find a doctor, they can't get into overcrowded emergency rooms, they can't get a bed, they're still waiting for operations and, for every wait list that you might bring down—although we don't know how we'd ever measure it with this bunch—there's going to be a new waiting list created somewhere else for some other procedure that people are going to have to have.

In a similar fashion, our province's system of education has a long way to go. I realize that the Premier sees himself as the self-declared champion of innovation and education. Whatever our political differences may be, I recognize from my dealings with him that I think his belief in the importance of education is quite sincere. But the fact is, good intentions don't equal good policy.

The Premier has, for some time now—

Hon. Mr. Bradley: You raised tuition.

Mr. Tory: I raised tuition? You are the biggest non-answerers in the history—

Hon. Mr. Bradley: No, no, no. You raised tuition.

Mr. Tory: And you're about to. Why doesn't the member for St. Catharines stand up right now and say they'll freeze tuition for another—

Hon. Mr. Bradley: Fifty per cent, you raised tuition.

The Speaker: The government House Leader knows better. If the Leader of the Opposition would continue his speech unfettered—through the Speaker, please.

Mr. Tory: The member for St. Catharines is just not able to contain himself. It's unbelievable. The longer he's been here, the more irascible and so on he gets. It's unbelievable.

Interjections.

Mr. Tory: Mr. Bradley knows that I say that tongue-in-cheek because he behaved exactly the same way when I worked for Premier Davis 23 years ago. It hasn't improved, but nor has it got significantly worse, and I would say that's a cause for a major victory.

The Premier has, for some time now, promised to cap class sizes for our youngest children. However, nothing is being done. Last year, only 36% of Ontario primary classes had actually made the hard cap of 20 students. We saw the spectacle of the minister coming forward. When you look in the platform, there was no asterisk there saying, "If we can," or "Maybe there'll be a few people left out," or "Maybe there'll be places where it won't happen"; it just said that it would be done, period, full stop, for every class in the early elementary grades.

Yet what we find is that here we are better than halfway through the term and 36% have measured up to the hard cap, with all kinds of excuses on how many people never will, and they haven't even bothered to bring forward the amendments to the Education Act that are required in order to make sure that that cap becomes something that is part of the law of this province. So this is, too, just like all the rest of it, becoming another rapidly breaking, if not broken, Liberal promise to be added to the heap of broken promises that came before.

A sensible person would think that the government would do everything it can to help our students succeed. Yet the Minister of Education made the remarkable announcement that this government would respond to disappointing test scores by making the tests easier, by dumbing down, as they say. They are telling our students that the best way to respond to the challenge is not to work harder but to lower the bar. That is not the right message to send to our students. Perhaps there are some changes that are needed in order to fine-tune what has been done, but dumbing down and taking the whole thing down quite a few notches is not going to send the right message to the students of Ontario, it's not going to send the right message to the educators of Ontario, it's not going to send the right message to the parents of Ontario and, I would argue, it's not going to send the right message about Ontario to the rest of the world in terms of the standards we set in this province.

How's the time clock? Six minutes? My goodness gracious, I have far more to say than that.

So it's not the way to prepare them for a competitive world.

On post-secondary education, I said that I thought what was being done to increase that investment was right in principle and that we would wait to see the fine

print, to see the funds flow and to see what was actually done with the money before being too enthusiastic in our commendation.

I take it from Bonnie Patterson of Trent University, who said, "We're well into our fiscal year and we still haven't seen the flow of resources." That's what she had to say after the throne speech.

Again, there are real people and real students and universities looking for the results they were promised but still can't see. The throne speech, quite frankly, six months or so after these commitments to post-secondary education were made, two years after the commitments in the earlier grades were made, should have spelled out the details, should have put the hard caps and the hard details in place and got the law changed.

That brings me to energy. Talk about a made-in-Ontario crisis in energy. It is the habit of this government, and we see it happening day after day, to announce and reannounce and then reannounce again, and not surprisingly they have to go back quite often on their commitments in order to push back a project's deadline. That, of course, just gives them another excuse for another reannouncement later on.

I will only say this: that how this government could proceed to announce—and then, of course, they've broken that promise too in terms of their deadline on the coal plants—the coal decision, announced back in 2003 as well, without having, then or now, any plan whatsoever on where the power is going to come from to replace the 20% to 25% of our electricity that came from those plants, I will never understand. It's just irresponsible. It's not businesslike; it's not sensible. It's irresponsible and it is evidence, I think, of an overall attitude on these things, to say, "Well, you know, political ideology is actually far more important than examining things on a businesslike basis, doing the hard work, doing the homework, considering the options."

This government, instance after instance—LCBO, nuclear energy—announced their findings before they even received the reports that they go out and commission among people who are great experts—with the exception, of course, of forestry. They commissioned one of the best panels of experts they could find from around the province and then promptly rejected most of what those people—from unions, from municipalities, from companies and from all over the place—said.

We should have had a throne speech that left ideology at the door, that committed to a businesslike approach, that would commit to a full and public review of our energy needs instead of what we see happening now, which is reports that are accepted when it suits them and not accepted when it doesn't suit them. Decisions are made before the reports are received. The whole thing absolutely defies description. Anybody who disagrees, of course, with any aspect of their policy is a Neanderthal. Whoever they are—Energy Probe, mayors, forestry workers—they're all Neanderthals. It's only these people who have all the answers and know how to do it.

I talked about agriculture—nothing for the farmers in this throne speech. The same ad campaign they an-

nounced up at the plowing match—basically, to announce the annual ad campaign, you have to do Foodland Ontario—is an insult to the farmers of this province. The campaign has gone on every year for decades, and to say that is the answer to people who can't put the crops in the ground next spring, can't meet the payments the banks are asking for, is just unbelievable. That was your last hurrah before you left. I'm sure you drafted that one up: "We'll send them an ad campaign and really make them happy out there in rural Ontario." But it doesn't answer the \$170 million that has been cut from the budget and the spending of the minister of—

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): That's a lie.

Mr. Tory: I know; tell me it's rubbish. I know; go ahead.

The Speaker: The Minister of Labour will withdraw.

Hon. Mr. Peters: I withdraw that comment.

Talk about the \$125 million you cut—

The Speaker: Minister of Labour. Minister. The Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Tory: The Premier says he cares about farmers, but actions speak louder than words. At least the Premier should be straight with the farmers and indicate once and for all if he does see a viable future for them, because everything he has done indicates that it's just not something that makes his radar screen at all.

Forestry: no plan at all to stem the loss of jobs in the north; absolutely nothing. A report from the best panel of experts the minister could find—and then you take little bits and pieces of it and announce this program that the industry says just isn't going to work at all.

Public safety: They've announced probably eight times they are going to have 1,000 officers, and, as I pointed out to the Premier today in question period—not one. There are not 1,000 new officers; not 100; not one new police officer in any community in this province in furtherance of that promise; two years plus into the mandate, there's not one to show for it. This is a government that's much more focused—think of all they had to say on pit bulls last summer, all the time and airwaves that were taken up with that, and yet on police officers and more help for communities and kids and families to help fight crime, we have nothing.

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Gridlock: We have urban Ontario families—and I know it's one and a half minutes. I think you'll give me the latitude perhaps to speak until 5 o'clock, Mr. Speaker, and then I will be finished. We have urban Ontario families struggling under a system that just doesn't work. Traffic gridlock hurts the economy; it keeps commuters away from their family. We have from the platform that the Liberals will create the Greater Toronto Transit Authority that "will be given the clout and resources to tackle gridlock." Here we are two years later: no transit authority. They are promising it again in this throne speech. Meanwhile, people are spending hours of their time going to work.

Garbage: It was a pathetic spectacle we saw here today with the bravado of somebody getting up and

saying, “Well, we’ve done more in eight months than you did in 12 years,” and so on. They have done absolutely nothing, and there’s been no insistence on anyone having a plan to deal with this or on even setting out how they are going to achieve their own goals of recycling and diversion, again, as contained in their election platform.

Do you know what the best announcement was in the entire throne speech? It was the creation of the Bob Hunter Memorial Park. That, I’m happy to support. That was pretty good. But that said, when you get to the point where the most substantive thing you can point to in a speech from the throne is the creation and naming of a park after a great activist and a couple of “novelty” items, to quote the Premier, that are thrown in there for good measure, I have to tell you, that really is just too much.

Speaking of novelty items, there’s the money-back guarantee on birth certificates. I’ll tell you the money that people want back: They expect the government of Ontario to produce birth certificates in a timely fashion and get themselves organized to do it. The money they want back is some of the health tax. They want some of that money back. That is what they want.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): And the energy.

Mr. Tory: They want their own energy money back that, as is suggested, they are still hoarding in their bank accounts.

You know what else? When somebody went last week to see if you could actually get one of these birth certificates on-line, the whole Web site was down, and they didn’t tell anybody in the fine print that you have to be eight years of age or younger in order to get the guaranteed birth certificate. So it’s just all part of the same malarkey.

On democratic reform, the back bench continues to be muzzled. Ministers of the crown persist in leading the charge in interventions in this House despite the Premier’s commitment to the contrary. Freedom-of-information requests continue to be obstructed and delayed. I can tell you right now, we’re going to continue to challenge this lack of accountability, this lack of transparency.

The first Liberal throne speech committed to not raising taxes; that was ignored. The first Liberal throne speech vilified private-public partnerships for new hospitals; now the Liberals embrace those with both arms. The first Liberal throne speech promised to provide a stable, reliable electricity supply, a supply that is more in jeopardy now than ever. The first Liberal throne speech promised answers to youth violence and traffic gridlock, and yet the only voice representing Ontarians, speaking up for Ontarians on those two issues, among others, is the Progressive Conservative caucus.

While there is a lot I disagree with in this throne speech, bad intentions are not the tragic flaw of this government. The flaw of the government—the main flaw, the most important flaw—lies in its lack of vision, its unwillingness to take tough decisions, notwithstanding their claim to the contrary, its incredible record of broken

promises, the fact that its word and its leader’s word now mean nothing, and the fact that it refuses to be accountable to the people of Ontario for its decisions.

At the end of the day, a throne speech is nothing more than words printed on paper and read by a distinguished Ontarian. Unless it is backed up by action, by real commitment, by a sense of integrity, by a sense that the words mean something and that the word of the leader of the government means something, it might as well never be printed or read at all.

The Liberals’ first throne speech was a lost opportunity. Their first two years in government under Mr. McGuinty’s leadership have been a lost opportunity. The Liberals say they’ve changed. I say, prove it to the people of Ontario. They say they have a plan. I say, show us the plan on all these subjects we’ve talked about today. They say they are the party best prepared to face the difficult choices of tomorrow. We hear that a lot of people across the province disagree with that.

These days, the media’s focus is on issues of government scandal, and I recognize that such scandals will be the focus of the Premier’s attention for some time now. But the real scandal, I would argue, did not emerge last week. It is the scandal of two years of broken promises; two years of seeing our leadership have their word mean nothing and not care about it; two years of doing things quite differently from what you said you would do; two years of irresponsible management; two years of ignoring the plight of hard-working Ontarians who are having trouble coping out there, and who hope that, maybe just once, this McGuinty Liberal government might find themselves in the corner of the people. That’s what the real scandal is.

This speech did not speak to real people who are out there hurting, with real problems, and who need real help right now. It did nothing to address their challenges. In fact, the challenges of those people—those average, hard-working people who are working harder and falling further behind—didn’t even make the radar screen of this government. There wasn’t one acknowledgment, one mention, one issue or one initiative that found its way into this throne speech for those people right now.

Well, Mr. McGuinty and the Liberals may be silent on this subject, they may be silent and their throne speech may be silent, but the Progressive Conservative Party, the official opposition, will not be silent on these subjects. Over the coming sitting of Parliament, we’re going to make sure that the concerns of those Ontarians who are hurting the most get represented in this House. We are not going to let the government ignore them or forget them. We will fight for fairness and balance and ensure that people have a voice, because the kind of government we’ve been getting—the kind of leadership, the kind of abdication of any sense of having one’s word mean something, the kind of “say one thing and do another”—is not good enough for the people of Ontario. This is not good enough for the kind of government people deserve in this province.

So to that end, I would like to move this amendment to the motion moved in reply to His Honour’s address:

I move that the address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by striking out all the words after, “We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session,” and replacing them with the following:

“However, the current speech from the throne ignores the real problems faced by real working families throughout Ontario; and

“Whereas, in place of real action for Ontario’s families this throne speech offers nothing more than warmed-over old announcements and ‘novelty items’; and

“Whereas the throne speech ignores the real hardship imposed by the new Liberal health tax during an already difficult time; and

“Whereas the throne speech ignores the real hardships that Ontarians face in paying more for electricity, home heating and vital medical care; and

“Whereas the throne speech continues to neglect the mounting problems of nursing supply, wait-lists or timely access to care; and

“Whereas, based on this Liberal government’s broken promises in their first throne speech ... Ontarians have valid reason to doubt the contents of the current one.

“Therefore, I regret to inform His Honour that the current Liberal government has failed to keep its election commitments, failed to listen to the real needs of Ontario families and have instead persisted in unreasonable taxation, undisciplined spending and continued neglect of the real needs of Ontarians. We therefore condemn this government for ignoring the real problems facing real Ontario families and demand immediate action before it’s too late.”

The Speaker: Mr. Tory has moved the following amendment:

“I move that the address in reply to the”—

Hon. Mr. Bradley: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense?

Mr. Baird: No.

The Speaker: “I move that the address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by striking out all the words after, ‘We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour

for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session,’ and replacing them with the following:

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“Whereas the throne speech continues to neglect the mounting problems of nursing supply, wait-lists or timely access to care; and

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Mr. Tory: Mr. Speaker, I’ve completed my comments, but I just want to thank you for your indulgence in allowing me a few extra moments beyond the hour to say that I really do think the people of Ontario have the right to expect better. We’re going to be continuing our work over the next session of Parliament to make sure we get that.

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): I move adjournment of the debate.

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

Hon. Mr. Bradley: The government moves adjournment of the House until 6:45 p.m. this evening.

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

This House stands adjourned until 6:45 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1702.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)		

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

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Michael Prue, Monique M. Smith,
Norman W. Sterling, Kathleen O.Wynne

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