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of Debates  
(Hansard)**

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des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Tuesday 18 October 2005**

**Mardi 18 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

Tuesday 18 October 2005

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 18 octobre 2005

*The House met at 1330.  
Prayers.*

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### EARTHQUAKE IN SOUTH ASIA

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I rise to remind honourable members and citizens of Ontario that we have an obligation and a moral responsibility to ensure that the plight of the people of Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and the epicentre of the earthquake in Kashmir are not forgotten. As time passes and this tragedy slips from the front pages of our newspapers, the urgency to provide support and aid to the relief efforts may well be lost. We cannot allow that to happen. In fact, the death toll, now at 48,000, continues to climb, the injured number more than 60,000 and a staggering four million are homeless.

Among those demonstrating leadership in organizing relief efforts are community leaders such as Markham Councillor Khalid Usman, who, together with the International Development and Relief Foundation, hosted a very successful fundraising event in Rexdale this past Sunday in which I had the honour to participate. John Tory, the leader of the Ontario PC Party, attended a similar event, organized by the Islamic Foundation of Toronto, in Scarborough. And we both had the opportunity to participate in a radio appeal on the Radio 770 AM program Sazo Awaz, hosted by Arif Muzzffer, sponsored by Mr. Shahid Hashmi and supported by community leaders like Mr. Aftab Rizvi and Dr. Shanaz Dar.

I once again call on Premier McGuinty to respond to John Tory's appeal to the government of Ontario to increase its support beyond the \$1 million initially committed and to announce a matching private donations program.

#### GOLDEN HORSESHOE MARATHON

**Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West):** I rise in the House today to express my sincere respect and admiration for the six wheelchair athletes who took part in the 2005 Golden Horseshoe Marathon. This past September, Charlie Cetinski, Harvey Uppal, Les McLaughlin, Duc Giang, Kevin Duchane and Chuck Mealing demonstrated an enormous amount of will, determination and athletic ability as they wheeled a total

of 242 kilometres from Niagara Falls to our front door here at Queen's Park.

On day three of this incredible event, the athletes made their way to the front entrance of the McMaster University Medical Centre, where I was happy to greet them and welcome them to Hamilton West. These athletes demonstrated an incredible amount of strength and resilience as they tested their own endurance and physical ability while raising funds that go toward stem cell research that can benefit spinal cord injuries and other neurological diseases.

The Golden Horseshoe Marathon was conceived by Charlie Cetinski in 1999 as a fundraiser for various organizations such as McMaster University research and innovation, the Canadian Paraplegic Association and the Hamilton resource centre.

Dr. Michael Rathbone, who was also present to meet these wonderful athletes, has been working with a team of researchers at McMaster University and is very close to a major breakthrough in stem cell research. The proceeds from this fundraiser will encourage the continued development of McMaster's leadership in innovation and research of this major project with global benefit.

I'd like to offer my congratulations to the participants and organizers of the Golden Horseshoe Marathon from all of us in Hamilton West and here at Queen's Park. You are truly an inspiration to all of us.

#### JENNIFER TEAGUE

**Mr. John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton):** Today I rise on a very serious and sombre note to pay tribute to a young woman from my riding of Nepean-Carleton. Last month, Jennifer Teague, an 18-year-old student at Elizabeth Wyn Wood Secondary alternative program, tragically went missing from suburban south Nepean. Residents were saddened to learn some days later that her body was found not far from her home.

Jennifer was a beautiful young woman, a talented athlete. Her life was taken in her prime; she had a very bright future. She is survived by her older brothers Carey and Kevin and her parents Ed and Jean Teague.

Throughout this entire tragedy the Ottawa Police Service and Chief Vince Bevan have worked diligently throughout the search and now on the criminal investigation. I'd like to publicly acknowledge their dedication and hard work.

Today the Jennifer Teague Memorial Golf Tournament is taking place to raise funds for victims of vio-

lence. I'd like to congratulate everyone who is working on this event to make it a success.

This tragedy has also had a terrible effect on our entire community. In a sense, it's a loss of the community's innocence. A culture of fear now pervades much of the community. Young women are afraid to walk the streets at night and parents are worried about the security of their children.

A key concern of the community is the number of uniformed police officers on the streets of south Nepean. We therefore welcome the government's announcement of 1,000 new police officers and hope they will look favourably on Ottawa's request for 90 officers—Ottawa being the second-largest city in the province. Let's move on this community concern in an expeditious manner.

#### KAWARTHA CHOICE FARMLAND FOODS

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** Once again I have the pleasure of speaking to this House about Kawartha Choice Farmland Foods, a local Peterborough-Kawartha initiative that has been running now for almost two years. On Monday, September 26, 2005, in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce annual meeting, the Kawartha Choice Farmland Foods initiative, in competition with communities all across this great country of ours, took home the gold in the National Award for Leadership project. The award was presented to Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce chair Bill Casey and general manager Stuart Harrison. Well done, guys.

As a matter of fact, two awards were presented: a gold, silver and bronze award from the judging committee and a people's choice award from the convention delegates. Peterborough won first place in both categories.

Kawartha Choice is a local initiative designed to provide marketing and branding material and concepts to local agricultural producers and the companies that sell their products. Marketing materials are available from local butchers, grocery stores and restaurants to help identify their products for consumers. From beef to buffalo, honey to maple syrup or apples to sweet corn, the Kawartha Choice logo is your assurance of the quality and integrity of locally grown products.

The Web site, kawarthachoice.com, is a main source of information and marketing material. It contains lists of producers who sell at the farm gate, at area farm markets and at special events.

I'm delighted by the success of this local Peterborough-Kawartha agricultural initiative. The folks at the Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce have taken a local idea and brought it to this great nation. This is another exciting development in the short history of the Kawartha Choice Farmland Foods initiative and is a testimony to the entrepreneurial and imaginative spirit of the residents of Peterborough.

#### ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CHIEFS OF POLICE

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North):** Today I'm very pleased to welcome to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. The association is currently headed by Chief Armand La Barge of the York Regional Police Service. Our leader, John Tory, and myself met this morning for over an hour with Chief La Barge and about 30 other chiefs, representing police services from a wide variety of communities across our province.

Clearly they are an organization extremely frustrated with the lack of action from the McGuinty government. As an example, today the association announced the formation of a blue ribbon justice reform committee. They will be working together with police, government and community leaders to seek solutions to issues that hinder the efficiency and effectiveness of our criminal justice system.

There are numerous issues facing our police leaders, including the growth in criminal areas such as gang violence, gun violence, crystal meth and other illegal drug operations, child pornography and Internet luring, lack of police resources and of course the potential cuts of up to \$300 million from the justice ministries.

On behalf of all Ontarians, I thank the OACP for their continued commitment to making Ontario a safer place to live in spite of a government that does not consider community safety a top priority. I would like to have everybody in the House give a warm round of applause to the folks who are here, and particularly to my chief of police in the Midland Police Service, the former president of the OACP, Paul Hamelin, and his group of friends.

1340

#### SUPPORT FOR SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** This government has had lots of lofty talk about its commitment to the South Asian community, but when it really counts, unfortunately and sadly, the McGuinty Liberals are nowhere to be found.

South Asians in Hamilton and region were victims of a devastating hate crime on September 15, 2001, which the McGuinty government still has done nothing to rectify. In a vicious assault against community members, the Hindu Samaj Temple was set ablaze by arsonists. It was a blatant act of post-September 11 racist backlash.

The incident remains a stain on Ontario's reputation as a place where diversity is celebrated and supported. No perpetrators were caught and brought to justice. The community was left to rebuild its temple and cultural centre from the ashes, without a shred of support from the Ontario government.

Just as they had the first time, community members reached into their own pockets to restore this important landmark, but even with a sizable bank loan, the

insurance settlement and massive donations, the need for government involvement in a cultural project has never been clearer. We should help ease the damage of the desecration and send significant signals that racism will not be tolerated and its victims will not be abandoned.

We have an opportunity to turn a negative into a positive. Surely there is room in the government's funding envelope for helping to complete the Hindu Samaj Temple restoration and erase a provincial and national shame. I would like to believe that just once the McGuinty government would do more than just say the words and instead show real, tangible financial support for innocent people victimized by a massive hate crime here in Ontario.

#### SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

**Mr. Mario G. Racco (Thornhill):** Yesterday, I had the opportunity to visit the breakfast and basketball program at a school in my Thornhill riding. With parents going off to work, some children are not able to get adequate attention and nutrition in the morning. The breakfast and basketball program makes sure that these children are well fed and ready for the day's challenges in the classroom. Playing basketball with a former NBA player is also a special privilege these children get to enjoy. Being active, healthy, happy and nourished are not options for the children of Ontario; they are necessities.

The breakfast and basketball program began four years ago and has grown ever since. In the past, the program received private funding and the government provided gift cards from major Canadian retailers. Last week they were pleased to receive the first instalment of funds from the student nutrition program. The school is one of 36 schools in York region that will receive almost \$114,000 from the McGuinty government to go toward revamping student nutrition programs. The community-based nutrition programs across the province will affect over 250,000 students and are part of our government's current investment of \$8.5 million.

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services should be thanked for providing assistance to this program. Special thanks to Oksana Majaski, who volunteers so much of her time to make this program work, and former NBA player Mitch Wiggins for the leadership and inspiration he provides to the children.

#### RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East):** Just a few weeks ago, along with the Premier and many of our caucus colleagues, I had the opportunity to attend a celebration of research and innovation at GlaxoSmithKline's facilities in the beautiful city of Mississauga. This celebration was an event to mark GlaxoSmithKline's \$23-million expansion of its Mississauga facilities. This announcement will mean approximately 75 new jobs for the people of Mississauga and Ontario. This huge invest-

ment is great news for the city of Mississauga and my constituents.

It's also an excellent example of the fruits of investing in research and innovation. Investments like this one will help ensure that Ontario will be at the forefront of the innovation race, which in turn will mean more jobs and a stronger economy here in Ontario. While private sector investment in research and technology is incredibly important, our government is also working hard to ensure that Ontario is a leader in research, development and innovation.

The first step was Premier McGuinty's creation of the new Ministry of Research and Innovation.

The second step came just last week. Our government returned to the House with a clear, focused plan for the province of Ontario. One of the key components of that new plan is this government's goal to boost Ontario's competitive advantage by increasing investment in research and development while endeavouring to forge a culture of innovation amongst our citizens.

Everyone knows that there are few prizes for those who finish second in the field of research. With our government's continued investment, we are giving our people the tools they need to survive and succeed on the cutting edge, and we're paving the way for a very bright future for all Ontarians.

#### WOMEN MOVING FORWARD INITIATIVE

**Mr. Mario Sergio (York West):** It is with great satisfaction and pride that I congratulate the hard-working visionaries in my community of York West, leaders such as Tonika Morgan, who spearheaded the Women Moving Forward project in the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre. Just recently, the Women Moving Forward initiative received over \$1.2 million from the Trillium Foundation. These funds will go a long way in assisting the most vulnerable women in my riding with intense basic training in life skills, career planning and better community participation over a span of five years.

Tonika Morgan says that receiving this funding means that we are steps closer to breaking the cycle for those most vulnerable women. Programs such as these are important in helping women gain the confidence and experience necessary to confront and successfully navigate change in their lives and the lives of their families.

I also applaud the great strides that the McGuinty government continues to make for the young and vulnerable women in Ontario. Last week, the Premier and the Minister of Education, the Honourable Gerard Kennedy, in an effort to offer more choices to our students, announced a new alternative high school diploma at Westview secondary school.

The McGuinty government believes it is so important to the wealth of our province that we continue to ensure that the promising future of vulnerable women is not overlooked. Congratulations once again to the Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre and the Women Moving

Forward project for their inspiration and their relentless hard work.

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

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### CHILDREN'S LAW REFORM AMENDMENT ACT, 2005 LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT LA LOI PORTANT RÉFORME DU DROIT DE L'ENFANCE

Mr. Craitor moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to amend the Children's Law Reform Act / Projet de loi 8, Loi modifiant la Loi portant réforme du droit de l'enfance.

**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. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls):** Yes, I do, Mr. Speaker; very brief.

Shortly after my election as the provincial member of Parliament for the riding of Niagara Falls, I was approached by a number of grandparents who asked me in the last session of the assembly to introduce a bill designed to allow caring, concerned grandparents to have legal access to their grandchildren, where it is in the best interests of the child. Since then, I've received over 2,000 e-mails, letters and personal contacts from loving grandparents who find themselves in this difficult situation.

I'm pleased to introduce a bill that would give recognition to the rights of grandparents, where, in the opinion of the courts, this would be in the best interests of the child. My proposed legislation, if passed, will amend the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationship with their grandparents.

### UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE ACT, 2005

Mr. Fonseca moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr13, An Act respecting The University of St. Michael's College.

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

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

### PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE OF MEDIAEVAL STUDIES ACT, 2005

Mr. Fonseca moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr21, An Act to incorporate the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies.

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

## MOTIONS

### 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 Tuesday, October 18, 2005, for the purpose of considering government business.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** 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 Tuesday, October 18, 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 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 1352 to 1357.*

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

#### Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Gerretsen, John	Pupatello, Sandra
Arthurs, Wayne	Hardeman, Ernie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Baird, John R.	Jackson, Cameron	Racco, Mario G.
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Rinaldi, Lou
Bartolucci, Rick	Kular, Kuldeep	Runciman, Robert W.
Bentley, Christopher	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Bradley, James J.	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Cansfield, Donna H.	Levac, Dave	Sergio, Mario
Caplan, David	Marsales, Judy	Smith, Monique
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	McMeekin, Ted	Smitherman, George
Cordiano, Joseph	McNeely, Phil	Takhar, Harinder S.
Craitor, Kim	Meilleur, Madeleine	Tascona, Joseph N.
Crozier, Bruce	Miller, Norm	Tory, John
Delaney, Bob	Mitchell, Carol	Watson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wilson, Jim
Duguid, Brad	O'Toole, John	Wong, Tony C.
Duncan, Dwight	Peters, Steve	Yakubuski, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Peterson, Tim	
Fonseca, Peter	Phillips, Gerry	

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

#### Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Kormos, Peter	Murdoch, Bill
Churley, Marilyn	Marchese, Rosario	Prue, Michael
Horwath, Andrea	Martel, Shelley	

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers):** The ayes are 58; the nays are 8.

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

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### STROKE CARE SYSTEM

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share with you and with all the members of this House more good news about the Ontario government's stroke strategy.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Yes, I agree.

Hear this: Since taking office two years ago, we have been working hard to complete a province-wide stroke care system, a system that emphasizes prevention, offers quicker treatment and benefits all Ontarians regardless of where they may live. I'm delighted to report that we have now put in place the final pieces for a fully functioning regional stroke care system.

Ontario's integrated stroke care system has three distinct elements: regional stroke centres that provide leadership and ensure that stroke rehabilitation services are applied consistently throughout the region; the next level consists of district stroke centres providing acute stroke care, local leadership and service integration; and, finally, stroke prevention clinics, which, as their name suggests, provide stroke prevention services to people at high risk of stroke and those who have had a small stroke.

Earlier today, I was delighted to announce that Huntsville District Memorial Hospital is the latest hospital to be designated as a district stroke centre, bringing the province-wide total to 18. I'm sure the honourable member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, as well as the people of that area, will join us in celebrating this development, as I can attest that he just did.

But there's more good news. Today, I also had the opportunity to announce that five more hospitals have been designated stroke prevention clinics: Bluewater Health in Sarnia, Brantford General Hospital, St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton, Hawkesbury and District General Hospital, and Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie. We now have 24 stroke prevention clinics throughout Ontario providing services like diagnosis, case management, clinical interventions and assistance with lifestyle changes. Thanks to the system we now have in place, patients in every region of Ontario can receive rapid diagnosis and treatment, as well as improved follow-up care within the community.

When dealing with strokes, one thing we know is that a quick response is absolutely critical, and we now have that capacity. As a result of this regional stroke care system, lives are being saved and the lives of those who have been affected by strokes are being improved.

The system we now have in place is working. Here are some stats: 63% of stroke cases today are referred to a stroke clinic, compared to only 9% in 1997-98. The time it takes for patients needing life-saving, clot-busting

drugs to receive treatment has decreased 35% since 2000. The in-hospital stroke mortality rate has declined from 17.2% in 1997-98 to 15.9% today. That means people are living longer.

The time, effort and money we have invested in our stroke strategy is well spent, because the fact remains that stroke statistics are daunting. Stroke is the third leading cause of death in Ontario and the leading cause of disability in our country. It's also the leading cause of admission of the elderly into our long-term-care homes.

Here in Ontario, 16,000 people per year suffer stroke and 90,000 of our fellow Ontarians are living with the effects of a stroke. Clearly, faced with an aging population, we're also facing a dramatic increase in the number of strokes. So we're working hard to rise to this challenge.

Thanks to the success of Ontario's stroke care system, this province is seen as a leader in the field. In the United States, the National Institutes of Health use Ontario's three-tiered approach to acute stroke care as a model for developing American priorities for future stroke care.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure and pride to join with all members to celebrate the progress that has been made, and to compliment those health care professionals staffing the front line of health care for the great work they're doing.

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Hon. Joseph Cordiano (Minister of Economic Development and Trade):** I am pleased to stand in my place to tell this House about the important steps our government is taking to support small business in Ontario.

When the McGuinty government took office, we decided we needed to provide the kind of vibrant business environment that encourages success and prosperity. We wanted to support the entrepreneurial spirit that drives the economy across this province. We knew if we did this, Ontarians would prosper as a result.

Small business is critical to our economy. Ninety-nine per cent of Ontario businesses are small and medium-sized. More than half of all Ontarians work in small and medium-sized firms, and this year, according to a CIBC study, more small businesses will be created in Ontario than in any other province in the country.

So the facts support our strategy, and we are moving forward in our commitment to this crucial segment of our economy. We have established the new Small Business Agency of Ontario—a direct link between small business and government, where small business interests are included in our decision-making process. This team of highly qualified members, from eight government ministries and the business community, will champion the concerns of small business within government. By having eight ministries represented, we have ensured that small businesses from all sectors will be heard, and we will listen very carefully.

Earlier this month, we unveiled the agency's new on-line regulatory registry to support small business. The registry provides information in plain language on proposed and approved regulations that affect business people directly every single day. As a result of this tool, business people will gain a better understanding and greater involvement in designing better business regulations that reduce their regulatory burden. As a result, they will be able to concentrate on what they do best: being successful, productive and innovative. That means more jobs and prosperity for all Ontarians.

This October, we are celebrating Small Business Month. We want to recognize the outstanding contributions to our prosperity that small business entrepreneurs make every single day. It's also an opportunity to inform entrepreneurs about all the programs our government has designed to help them succeed. The McGuinty government is celebrating the spirit of Ontario's 340,000 entrepreneurs, and we want to support their goals and ambitions every step of the way.

We want all our entrepreneurs to feel proud to be an Ontario small business. I urge everyone in this House and everywhere across the province to support small business in their communities.

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

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton):** Small Business Week in Ontario: Family businesses across this province are the backbone of Ontario's economy. Small businesses that have fewer than 49 employees in a business: there are more than 42,000 of these companies in Ontario. They are the economic engine of this province. In order to succeed and do well, they need a low-tax jurisdiction with a minimum of red tape and laws that create a level playing field. Your government is failing small business in all these areas.

In the spring of 2004, your budget raised small business taxes by 38% by cancelling a tax cut aimed at small businesses—a broken promise. You hiked hydro rates from 4.3 cents to 5.5 cents. Virtually all small businesses use well over the 1,000 kilowatts per month. This was a 28% increase to small businesses, and this was another broken promise. There will be more increases in hydro rates to come next year. You raised business property taxes by lifting the hard cap on business property tax, something you said you would not do—yet another broken promise. You raised the minimum wage from \$6.85 to \$7.15, going to \$8.00 by 2007, a 17% increase on small businesses. You allowed the WSIB premiums to continue to increase while this board operates under a cloud of accusations of mismanagement.

Your government is failing the small business community of Ontario. It is obvious from the litany of broken promises that you don't have a plan to either manage this economy or support small businesses. Perhaps the best we can expect is for you to go down to the cafeteria, get yourself some serviettes and start all over again with a new plan.

1410

## STROKE CARE SYSTEM

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo):** I'm pleased to respond to the announcement made today by the Minister of Health. He—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Stop the clock. I need to be able to hear the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. I would ask all members to restrain from helping her any more than you already have. Thank you.

**Mrs. Witmer:** As I say, this heart and stroke strategy was actually undertaken in 1999 by our government with the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario. At that time, we invested \$70 million. We added another \$30 million. I know the minister knows that. We actually designated and funded the nine regional stroke centres, as well as some of the district stroke centres. We also announced the Ontario heart health program in 1998 and provided funding for the prevention of strokes.

I'm pleased to say that as a result of that initiative, there were gains made. For example, our stroke strategy in cardiac care policies resulted in 60% more cardiac procedures taking place since 1995, and we were able to reduce wait times for cardiac procedures by 53% from 1995 to 2002.

I guess I thought the announcement that the minister might be making today was related to a commitment he made in this House on October 13, last Thursday, where he said, "I can tell you that this coming Monday we will be launching our wait times Web site, a Web site that will empower Ontarians by providing them with accurate and timely information about wait times." I went on the Web site just a few minutes ago, and the last time the Web site was updated was May of this year. It looks like another broken promise.

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** In response to the statement made by the Minister of Health, New Democrats want to commend the members of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario for the leadership role the foundation played in creating the model for the Ontario stroke strategy. They did that over many months of deliberation. We know there were many health care providers and health care professionals who used their expertise involving stroke and stroke care and who have been instrumental in ensuring that stroke patients will be able to get the health care they deserve, as soon as they need it and as close to home as possible. So we want to thank them for the work they did in developing this strategy.

Briefly to the second point, we know there are other health care providers and health care professionals who have gone to this government in a similar fashion, asking the government to establish the conditions that would enhance quality health care for the patients that they care for too. In this regard, the one example I want to use today references the Arthritis Society of Ontario, which itself has gone to the government and encouraged and



asked and said that they would work with the government to develop an arthritis strategy in the province of Ontario.

In its most recent publication dated September 2005, which all members received, the society published what they call a Checkup on Arthritis. It was a look at all provincial jurisdictions with respect to the policies, programs and the funding that each was dedicating to arthritis. The Arthritis Society made it very clear that Ontario doesn't have a strategy for arthritis, that only British Columbia recognizes arthritis as a priority and has developed a strategy to manage that chronic condition as a result.

In Ontario, chronic diseases like arthritis are treated or dealt with from a pan-chronic disease approach, not from a specific disease strategy and maintenance approach. At a time when there are about 1.6 million Ontarians who stated they had arthritis in 2001, and when we know that number will have risen to 2.8 million Ontarians who have arthritis by next year, 2006, it seems that Ontario must move to develop a strategy as well for arthritis management. This is, after all, the second most prevalent chronic condition in Ontario.

That strategy would include three things: joint replacement for end-stage arthritis, early diagnosis and treatment for inflammatory arthritis and, thirdly, chronic disease management. The society has given to all of us on more than one occasion all of the other recommendations in their 12-point plan to support those components.

Today I encourage the minister and his staff to work with representatives from the Arthritis Society of Ontario, who, like those who developed the strategy for stroke, are very interested in having in place a strategy that would provide the best possible health care for their patients too.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** This is in response to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Certainly we should all be waving our flag for Small Business Month because we know that our small business employers are an integral part of our economy here in Ontario, responsible for thousands of jobs. But then what we need to do is examine the irony of having this government proclaim this month when it's doing so much to hurt our small businesses, like the mom-and-pop enterprises that fuel the economic engine of this province.

The price of hydro is the number one issue that concerns employers large and small in Ontario. The high price of gasoline has further ignited their anger. The mess of the property tax assessment system, a regressive system that desperately needs attention, is another area where small business owners see the McGuinty Liberals falling down on the job. New businesses are reeling from the fact that under CVA they now pay more in taxes each year than they do in rent. How are start-up small businesses supposed to succeed with the McGuinty Liberals throwing roadblocks at them at every turn?

The minister says Ontario will have more small businesses created than in any other province. But how many of those small businesses are going to be able to survive in this environment? Minister, take off your blindfold. In the manufacturing base, 42,000 skilled jobs were lost and tens of thousands more are likely to go. That's truly going to cause suffering here in Ontario.

All those employees you have thrown out of work don't have the incomes now to support the small business community. Their consumer dollars aren't rippling through the economy any more. If there's one thing small businesses need, it's a steady supply of customers. Your policies have robbed small businesses of significant consumer spending power that they need to create more jobs, hire more people, and expand and flourish.

You have ripped away the basic tenets that small businesses need to really get ahead: affordable, reliable public hydro; stable and reasonable fuel prices; a fair, transparent and workable property assessment system; and funding support for municipalities to enable them to do more in the way of community economic development initiatives.

Your promise of "no new taxes" quickly went out the window, along with all your other promises, once you became the government. So don't stand here today and make any more hollow promises. If you really want to help small businesses, make a commitment to fix the problems that you've created that confront them every day. Actions speak much louder than a ceremonial proclamation once a year.

#### PERSONS DAY

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes to recognize international Persons Day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Mr. Bradley has asked for unanimous consent for each party to make statements for up to five minutes with regard to international Persons Day. Is it agreed? Agreed.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** Women's History Month provides an important opportunity to reflect upon the significant contributions of women to the history and growth of Ontario, to celebrate those who have stood for women's rights, who paved the way to equality, who helped build a strong and free nation.

The theme of this year's Women's History Month is Women and War: Contributions and Consequences. Today, we in this House are privileged to have almost 30 women who have made an immense contribution to Ontario. They are our military heroines, and they are seated today in our Speaker's gallery. Welcome to the House.

This is a tremendous day because this is the first time we've had such a collection of women here in the House,

with us in the Legislature. You are indeed welcome, and I hope it's not your last.

1420

This year, the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, has been declared Year of the Veteran in gratitude for the enormous debt we owe to men and women who served. On behalf of all Ontarians, our government thanks all veterans for the freedom, peace and democracy that we enjoy today.

When we think of veterans, the picture we often form is one of a male soldier lying in a muddy trench, storming a beach or marching home in victory. During Women's History Month, we want to refocus that picture. We are refocusing so that we can celebrate the contributions that women made to the war effort both at home and abroad.

It's a picture that provides an example for the next generation of women so that they too can be leaders in their community. It's a picture of a woman soldier flying a fighter plane, driving a tank, inspecting her troops. It is a picture of women veterans who are with us today. It is the picture of Una Golding walking into the recruiting office in Brandon, Manitoba, five days after her 18th birthday. It's the story of the members of the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service who have joined us here today, the picture of Vera Peel as a young woman who enlisted in the army because she felt it was her duty. These women volunteered to serve their country by maintaining anti-submarine equipment and aircraft as well as playing a vital role in communications and signalling. They, along with all women who served both home and abroad, performed crucial roles as full and equal partners in the support of Canada's war effort.

All of the veterans here with us today made a difference then and they continue to make a difference now. Our government is privileged to help share this history. We want to ensure that we educate young people about the experiences and contributions of the women who are with us today. We want to ensure that our young people see the image of Vera Morgan being taken to a secret training location on her first day in the army. We want to see that our young people study the portrait of Helen Hughes embarking on a five-mile march during the first morning of basic training in Kitchener.

Earlier this year, we announced our support of the Dominion Institute's Memory Project road show through the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat. Veterans working with the Memory Project road show continue to bring their stories to light and build an interactive and permanent legacy of our veterans' heroism and valour. I know that Jim Bradley, the minister responsible for seniors, shares with me a determination to ensure that the stories of our vets are preserved and passed on to future generations. Thank you, Minister. A great thanks to our minister responsible for seniors.

October 18 provides us with a moment to reflect on another milestone in women's history. It was on this day in 1929 that women were first legally recognized as persons in Canada, and thank God for that. The "persons"

case was a milestone in women's history, allowing them for the first time all the privileges and rights enjoyed by men under the Constitution.

The contribution of women during the Second World War was a milestone that had just as strong an impact on our history. The women veterans seated in the gallery here today propelled an unstoppable movement of women along the path to equality. They ushered in an era leading to full participation of women in all aspects of economic, social and cultural life, and in building the strong, vibrant, inclusive communities of Ontario today.

This Women's History Month, we look back upon this legacy. We reflect on their contributions and celebrate the military women who follow in their footsteps, women such as Lieutenant Colonel Susan Beharriell, who is with us in the gallery today. This woman joined the Canadian Forces in 1973 and was a member of the first platoon of women to complete the same basic officers' training as men. We are thrilled that she is with us here today. Maybe we could ask her to stand. She is presently on the national security studies staff of the Canadian Forces College here in Toronto.

I ask all members of the House today to join me in recognizing these tremendous women who are part of our history and a part of Ontario's and Canada's future.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener-Waterloo):** Today, I am pleased to speak on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus in recognition of Persons Day. As has been said, today marks the 76th anniversary of the British Privy Council's ruling that women were indeed persons under Canadian law.

We owe this historical landmark ruling to five outstanding and determined women who took their fight to the highest court in Canada at the time, the Privy Council in England. It was Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby, Louise McKinney and Henrietta Muir Edwards who made up the Famous Five who were responsible for this decisive victory in the fight for equality of Canadian women. They won the right for women to sit in the Senate, thus opening the door for potential political opportunity to any woman who would take the challenge.

So today is Persons Day. It is a highlight in this month of celebration. This year's theme is Women and War: Contributions and Consequences. I am pleased to join my colleagues in this House in congratulating the women who are here today. It is wonderful to have this opportunity to celebrate the many and countless contributions that women have made in the war effort, both here at home and abroad. These women have served and continue to serve as full and equal partners in the war effort. In fact, it is these women who have been role models for many other women to follow. It is these women who have been the pioneers and who have laid the foundation for women to enjoy success in many other areas of life in Canada.

We have seen women increase their influence and continue to excel in non-traditional roles, just as the war effort was a non-traditional role. We see women today increasing their influence and excelling in business, the

arts, politics and sports. Women have made great strides forward, just as these women in the gallery have. Women have served as justices in the Supreme Court, they have run for Premier of this province, as Lyn McLeod did, and they have served as Prime Minister of Canada, as Kim Campbell did.

Today women have more economic power and access to a wider range of jobs and opportunities than ever before. More are pursuing post-secondary education. More are the successful owners of small businesses. Today we salute all women who are working hard toward independence and self-sufficiency.

Today it is a special privilege that we have to honour and recognize these heroic women who served in war and peace. Congratulations to you all.

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth):** I too, on behalf of New Democrats, would like to welcome—although I can't see them; they're way back there—the female veterans who are here today and to congratulate them, thank them and honour them for their contribution, which quite frequently gets lost in the shuffle when we honour veterans. When I go to the Legions in my riding of Toronto–Danforth, and in Beaches–East York, I spend a lot of time with the female veterans who come on a regular basis to those places.

I must say that I'm really happy to be here today, standing as a full person—aren't you all happy that I'm here today as a full person?—because of the work of these women who are with us here today and because of the work of these five women we are honouring. I'm honoured to pay tribute to the 76th anniversary of the “persons” case and the Famous Five who won this landmark ruling for all Canadian women. They challenged and defeated the status quo, and we all know from this place that challenging and defeating the status quo can take years and a lot of hard work. What they saw happen was women moving from secondary citizens, which kept them from entering the arena of political decision-making and all kinds of other things, into this sphere. We've got to remember, as we stand here, that women not only were not allowed to run for office, they were not allowed to vote.

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I would say to all the young people and the young men sitting here today, can you imagine a time in your life when you would be considered a non-person? It was just 76 years ago that girls and women in this country were not considered persons. That's pretty incredible. That's within my mother's lifetime and, I'm sure, for the young people here today, within some of your grandmothers' lifetimes.

This past year, I held Ontario's greatest women contest, and I want to thank all members from all parties who participated in that. I must say it was so well-received that I've been encouraged to make it an annual event and, if you will, also a Canada's greatest women event. How do we even begin to choose between those five women we're honouring today, let alone the veterans who are with us today and so many great women who have

contributed to this country for so many years, some of whom we haven't even heard about? There are women who came up on the list of women on my Web site from all over the province, some of whom I didn't know a whole lot about. I am honoured to have started that process, because that's really what it's all about: educating ourselves and young people about the history and the incredible contributions of women in this province and indeed in this country.

Their challenge 76 years ago to the interpretation of the term “persons” opened the door for women to take their rightful place in Parliament and all aspects of public life. I want to underscore here that they did it working individually and collectively, again a testimony to the strength women have when we work together. Occasions like this today remind us of this important lesson that we women in recent years sometimes tended to overlook.

I want to pay tribute for just a moment to LEAF, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund. They will be having their annual breakfast—I believe they first started in 1985—on Wednesday, November 2, at 7:30 in the morning. But once we get there, we all wake up and have a wonderful time honouring the women who contributed so much to our country and to these values. I invite all people—not just women, but everybody—to attend the breakfast on November 2. As you know, LEAF was established through the court system, through the legal system, to continue to fight for equality and equity for women. They are doing a tremendous job in furthering that agenda, and they need our support.

I want to end by leaving a quote with you that you're all familiar with: “Never retreat, never explain, never apologize; just get the thing done and let them howl.”

**Interjection:** Who said that?

**Ms. Churley:** That's my motto, and you remember who said that.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### PAROLE SYSTEM

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, do you support in principle the idea that a criminal who is sentenced to life in prison for second-degree murder and sexual assault should be given a day parole pass to Canada's Wonderland?

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** The leader of the official opposition has addressed a question to me that has nothing to do with the provincial jurisdiction. If someone has been given a life sentence for murder, he would be in a federal institution. He would be subject to a federal parole board. It has nothing really to do with me, and I can't answer for them.

**Mr. Tory:** It's too bad the minister doesn't have an opinion, but that's fine. We'll go on to the next part here. You've indicated, Minister, that your government intends to bring forward legislation this fall to transfer Ontario's parole responsibilities to the federal parole board, the same parole board that issues day passes to Canada's Wonderland to a man convicted of second-degree and sexual assault. Canada's Wonderland was also an option for that same board for another person sentenced to 14 years for robbery with a gun, as well as a criminal given a three-year jail term for sexual assault and drug trafficking.

Minister, why do you want to back away from your responsibility and your government's responsibility for community safety and hand parole in Ontario over to this federal bunch who think it's OK to send convicted criminals to Canada's Wonderland by the busload? Why would you do that?

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** First of all, it would be, I think, prudent for you to direct that question to your colleague in Ottawa, Mr. Harper, and have him ask that question there.

Getting back to the idea of the parole board, you should know that we have not made any decision regarding the parole board, but we do have a responsibility to look at how we can provide safe accommodation for the people of Ontario and also to look at whether or not there's duplication. I think the member would like to know that on any given day, we have 56,000 male offenders under community supervision. Of that number, 130 are on parole.

We now have a parole board in Ontario. We're one of only three provinces that have it. We have a federal parole system. I have a responsibility to look at whether or not there are some benefits to merging those two particular facilities. That decision has not been made, but I'd be remiss if I didn't at least examine it.

**Mr. Tory:** Let's look at the facts and maybe decide that it's a good thing that we're one of three provinces that has our own parole board. According to your own ministry, provincial offenders in Ontario are released before the end of their sentence approximately 14% of the time. The National Parole Board grants early releases to approximately 50% of convicted criminals.

Minister, people across the province, and the police chiefs, for example, who are here today, are rightly angry at Ontario's revolving-door justice system. Now you're set to make it even easier by handing this thing over for people to get out of jail early on parole. I think most people in Ontario don't think it should be easier to get out earlier, and so I ask the minister this: Why are you handing Ontario's parole system over to the bunch that brought us revolving-door justice in Ottawa? Why are you doing that?

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** The member keeps insisting that we're doing it, and I keep telling him that the decision has not been made. Also, the member will, I'm sure, want to know that in the correctional facilities in Ontario, where offenders are sentenced who are sentenced to two

years less a day, the average length of stay in our facility for a convicted offender is 66 days. The average length of stay for those people who are on remand is 34 days. So when you consider that people are there, on average, 66 days, if they're charged, 34 days if they're on remand, the idea that we are putting the community at risk with any of these people just isn't true.

What we are doing is trying to make sure the community is safe. We will not do anything that will put that in jeopardy. But we still have a responsibility to examine everything that we do in my ministry to see if there are effective ways of doing it.

**Mr. Tory:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we'll get to it another day, but the minister is looking at this the wrong way. They should be there longer than 66 days. That is the point for a lot of these people. They're getting a tap on the wrist.

#### WAIT TIMES

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** My next question is for the Minister of Health. Can you explain why the wait time between seeing a specialist and receiving treatment in Ontario—your definition of a wait time—has increased from seven weeks in 2003 to nine weeks today? Why are wait times going up on your watch?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** First off, to the honourable member who has yet to tell Ontarians where he would make his \$240-million cut in health care, I'd be interested in your response to that. I'd also be interested, in your next supplementary, if the honourable member could offer a source for his information.

**Mr. Tory:** I'm happy to: the 15th annual Hospital Waiting Lists in Canada survey, a survey you welcomed this morning. According to that survey, Ontario's wait times are going the wrong way and are increasing since your government took office in 2003. This is despite all of your rhetoric and all of your announcements, and despite the \$900 a head that you're collecting from people on the health tax that you said would reduce wait times.

According to the report, the wait time for hip and knee surgeries in Ontario has increased to 30 weeks, up from 24 weeks in 2004—a 25% increase. Recently, you shut down the only independent Web site, the joint replacement registry, which actually objectively monitored these wait times. Why are you hiding the truth from Ontarians when it comes to the wait times they face, and why are they getting worse on your watch?

1440

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** I've appreciated so much the honourable member's clarity in offering that the survey, not scientifically based in any way, that he offers as evidence, was completed—it's important—by none other than his leader—I should say, his former leader, Mike Harris, and the gang at the Fraser Institute.

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** It's another Tory story.

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** Yes, it's Tory, Tory, same old story.

What I will offer to the honourable member is that we'll be challenging the \$240-million cut that he has proposed for health care, and accordingly, he should offer that up. Also, to let the honourable member know, he referred to a Web site that's no longer available. There was no such Web site, sir. You should talk to the honourable member beside you. She could tell you that.

More to the point, Ontario soon will have available to all, on their Web site, state-of-the-art research, scientifically based, built on the work of expert panels in Ontario, hundreds and hundreds of doctors who have gotten together and done—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Tory:** Well, of course that Web site was promised by the minister for Monday, and I think it's Tuesday today—so yet again, not delivered on time.

Minister, if you compared this report to each of the reports for the last two years, here's the trend that emerges: Hip and knee surgeries have seen—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** The Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Tory:** Here's the trend that emerges: Hip and knee surgeries have seen wait times increase by 25% since last year. Medical oncology cancer treatment wait times increased 20% since last year. Patients now have to wait six weeks to receive a CT scan; they had to wait five weeks before. MRI scans now take 11.5 weeks, compared to 10 weeks when you were elected.

Our wait times, Minister, are going the wrong way. You shut down the only independent source that measured wait times, and you say, "Just trust us. Wait times are going to get fixed." My question to the minister is this: When you do come forward with your information, why should people believe you?

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** The honourable member has offered up, for his era of believability, a dependence upon Mike Harris. I think, in contrast, a lot of people are going to feel like we're off to a much better start.

I still give the honourable member the opportunity to indicate where the first instalment of his \$240-million cut to health care is going to come from; \$240 million is yet unallocated. The reality is this: Only one party in this Legislature and only one government in Canada campaigned on wait times. It was our government. As a result, there is a discussion going on in our country that was fuelled here in Ontario by our party in the last election.

In the time since: MRI access, up by 42%; CTs by more than 8%; hips and knees by 28%. This government, with hundreds of millions of dollars of investment that our Premier leveraged from the federal government, is investing in an eradication of wait time challenges, and soon—

**The Speaker:** Thank you. New question.

## PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** A question for the Acting Premier: This week, Ontario families are being hit with property tax assessment increases of 20% and 30%—a nasty blow to families already paying more for hydro, more for heating costs and more for gas prices. And what is the Premier's response? "We didn't run on that." Minister, your property tax system is unfair, it's arbitrary and it's hurting people. What is the McGuinty government's plan to fix this unfair situation?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** I'd refer that to the Minister of Finance, who I think has responsibility for this.

**Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet):** MPAC has finalized, as we all know, its reassessment for properties across Ontario for the year 2006. I'd remind the member opposite in the first instance that these do not constitute tax increases. There are a number of factors that go into the calculation of taxes that—I have to rethink this answer if Flaherty is nodding in agreement. One has to be cognizant—and perhaps the member is not, although, given his experience in raising taxes in past years—that in fact the assessment values are taken in the context of a mill rate across all of Ontario's municipalities, as is the education levy. I would urge those people in the province who are receiving their assessments and are concerned with them—there are rights of appeal available, and we will continue to monitor the situation.

**Mr. Hampton:** Ontario property taxes are now being set by the roll of a dice. People are being treated unfairly and arbitrarily, and what is the Premier's response? "We didn't run on that." You didn't run on setting a health tax of \$2.5 billion, and you didn't run on driving hydro rates through the roof either, but you've certainly done that, and done it very quickly.

Here is the reality: Property taxpayers across this province are being hurt by an unfair and arbitrary system. You are quick to act on some of these other fronts. Where is your plan to address the unfairness of your property tax system?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** I would remind the member opposite that municipalities do have a number of tools available to them to help mitigate these types of assessment changes. First of all we have a program that provides relief from reassessment related to tax increase to low-income senior and disabled homeowners upon application. We have programs to limit assessment-related tax increases on commercial, industrial and multi-residential properties. There are optional tools available to municipalities as well.

Again I remind the member that these tax increases and these assessment increases are not necessarily tax increases. Municipalities do have tools with which to manage them. It takes the assessed value of the property that will be applied against individual mill rates, and then the tax is calculated. We'll see where that winds up at the end of the tax season, we'll see where municipal mill

rates wind up, and I believe that overall we will see that most municipalities will be—

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Thank you. Final supplementary.

**Mr. Hampton:** Well, here's what the Ombudsman said. He describes your property tax system as "Monty Python-like." Here's what one opponent of the Mike Harris property tax system had to say, and I want to quote him: "Minister, when are you going to admit that you've screwed up royally when it comes to property tax reform in Ontario?" Who was that? That was Dalton McGuinty.

Minister, Dalton McGuinty told the people of Ontario to choose change. Why are you now endorsing and supporting the very property tax system that Dalton McGuinty used to say was screwed up and unfair to taxpayers?

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** Let me remind the member opposite that our 2004 budget featured a \$125 additional property credit for seniors, which you voted against. You voted against that. As always, the member opposite doesn't give you the whole story.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** What the Premier also said this morning is that we anxiously await the Ombudsman's report as well, and we will welcome its conclusions.

What did your critic say yesterday with respect to the property tax system? Let me quote. He was asked if you had a position on change, and he said it is "in the gestation of looking at some kind of ... policy." He says you'll have a position by 2007; you don't want to share your position too early. This was in the Ottawa Citizen, Saturday, October 15. Put your position on the table. Don't hide behind that. We're standing up for the assessment and for people in Ontario. We challenge you—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Thank you. Order.

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#### ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** My question is for the Minister of Energy, but it is interesting to see the Liberal finance minister defend Mike Harris's property tax system.

Minister, yesterday you announced a \$6.5-billion sweetheart deal with Bruce Power for more expensive, unreliable private nuclear power. You broke your promise for a full public debate on nuclear power, and you left out important details from your announcement, like who will cover the cost of overruns and the reductions in the lease payments given to Bruce Power.

You were also silent on something else: what to do with the radioactive waste, which is toxic for thousands of years. Minister, since you had so much to say yesterday, how much new toxic radioactive waste will your deal with Bruce Power generate that has to be looked after in Ontario?

**Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Energy):** I'm delighted to be able to say that, although the honourable member has been concerned about the lack of consultation, in fact, through a directive from the Ministry of Energy, the Ontario Power Authority has met with over 175 individuals. They have been in 40 newspapers; they've done public consultations; they've met with Greenpeace; they've met with Energy Probe. The consultation is continuing; they're not over yet. Also, if the member were going through the contracts, he would recognize that \$20 million every year will go toward the nuclear waste.

**Mr. Hampton:** We've learned that when you hold a couple of meetings, for the McGuinty government that constitutes a full open public debate about nuclear power.

My question was: How much more nuclear waste is going to be generated? I didn't hear an answer. We know that storing nuclear waste is dangerous, that it's complicated and that it's also very expensive. Yet the McGuinty government has no idea how much more nuclear waste is going to be generated.

Let me ask you this, Minister: Do you know how much it will cost hydro ratepayers to store the additional nuclear waste that will result from your special deal with Bruce Power? How much more will it cost people on their hydro bill?

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** I always find it interesting from the honourable member—he doesn't like nuclear; he doesn't like coal; he doesn't like gas; he doesn't like much of anything. The fascinating part is that while they were in government and had the opportunity to do something about nuclear, instead they cancelled 1,800 megawatts of clean renewable energy and they cancelled every conservation program in the province, and then they contributed to the \$10-billion overrun on Darlington.

**Mr. Hampton:** Minister, you can be forgiven because you weren't here then, but if you read the history books, it was the Peterson government—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** Stop the clock. Order. I can wait. Leader of the third party.

**Mr. Hampton:** It was the Peterson government that took a Darlington plant that was supposed to cost \$4.7 billion and took it to \$15 billion. It was the Liberal energy critic, one Dalton McGuinty, who said you should cancel the Conawapa project.

But I want to ask you this: It's a \$6.5-billion deal when you include the gift of lease reduction payments to Bruce Power and when you include the fact that the ratepayers of Ontario could be stuck with a billion-dollar cost overrun package, and all you get in the end is a fixer-upper.

You promised, Minister, a full public debate on nuclear power. When is the full, open public debate on nuclear power going to happen now that you're already doing a deal which costs too much and, frankly, still doesn't protect the safety of the people of Ontario?

**Hon. Mrs. Cansfield:** Our obligation is to keep the lights on in Ontario. We have a vision that includes safe,

reliable, clean energy for this province. We know we have to build, we know that we have to refurbish or maximize our existing assets, and we know we have to conserve as well. That is the direction we're going, because we have 25,000 megawatts of new supply: 2,200 in, 9,000 more, another 1,500. We're on our way, with more to come.

#### GREENBELT ADVERTISING

**Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition):** I have a question for the Acting Premier. The voters of Ontario believed you when your party promised, and I'm quoting from your election platform, that the McGuinty Liberals "will ban self-promotional government advertising." Can you explain why your government is breaking your own promise and spending \$1.5 million of scarce taxpayers' money on a massive advertising campaign to promote your flawed greenbelt plan?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** I should think the minister responsible for the greenbelt wants to answer this.

**Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader):** I know that the Leader of the Opposition has been against the greenbelt from the beginning. When he's with his downtown Toronto environmentalists, he has one point of view, but when he's with people who are opposed to the greenbelt, those who are opposed to environmental change in the province of Ontario, he has another point of view.

As he would know, the Greenbelt Foundation is completely independent. It was set up in a very similar fashion to what your government did when you set up the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation. Any decisions that are made by that entity are in fact independent of government. They do not answer to us. So I don't know what the member is talking about when he talks about this being a government program. It is a foundation. He should speak to the foundation if he's dissatisfied.

**Mr. Tory:** It would be a lot easier for you to speak to this independent foundation than for me, because the deputy minister of one of the departments and half the board are appointed by the government of Ontario. The \$25 million in scarce taxpayers' money that you've sent over there seems to have the sole purpose of promoting the greenbelt. Not only are you subverting your own advertising rules by doing it through the back door, this self-promotional advertising, but it's obvious that you've broken another promise.

The ads in question, when you go to the Web site, inform people of such necessary facts as that apples grow on trees and deer are not found in the suburbs. This organization is so awash in the taxpayers' cash, which you obviously have just floating out of your hands like it means nothing, that they can set up an office in a swanky office building in Yorkville and spend money like it's going out of style.

My question is this: How can you possibly defend this kind of gross misuse of the taxpayers' dollars? Will you pull the ads right away, or are you telling us this was just another promise that you're going to break and you're going to try and do it through the back door this time?

**Hon. Mr. Bradley:** I must, when I'm talking to the environmentalists in downtown Toronto, tell them of your great concern, because the environmental community is very supportive of the Greenbelt Foundation. I'm sure that a former minister of the government, Dr. Robert Elgie, who is head of the greenbelt commission, would be an individual who would recognize the importance of the greenbelt.

You know full well that this is independent. You'll remember, I think, that when you set up the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation you had an allocation of funding of several million dollars for that foundation as well. You did not, to your credit, interfere with the manner in which they chose to utilize those funds. I do not intend to stand over top of these individuals and impose upon them any government policy or government recommendations. They are there on behalf of the Greenbelt Foundation to promote it and, of course, to make sure that it's successful. I hope you share my view that it's going to be successful. I don't think so, so far. I think the right wing has gotten to you and not the downtown environmentalists.

1500

#### WASTE DISPOSAL

**Ms. Marilyn Churley (Toronto–Danforth):** I have a question to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday, in response to questions about your government's lack of a plan to deal with a possible garbage crisis in the GTA if Michigan suddenly closes its borders, you said, among many other things, "We have an amazing plan." Would you be kind enough to table this amazing plan with us today?

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex):** I appreciate the question from the member from Toronto–Danforth. She will recall that the quote had to do with our waste diversion plan. I remember being asked that question by the Toronto Star and answering it. That was the context of what I was talking about. I want to share—since you want to know, of course—our amazing waste diversion plan that we have as a government.

In Ontario, each municipality is responsible for identifying its own waste management solutions. That said, we're committed to giving municipalities the tools they need to make responsible waste management decisions. No municipality should assume that disposing of its waste outside of Ontario is an acceptable long-term solution. We must continually strive to reduce, reuse and recycle the waste that each municipality generates.

I might add, you share with me the fact that it's a wonderful week, being Waste Reduction Week here in Ontario. I'm sure you support that.

**Ms. Churley:** Well, parliamentary assistant, I understand that there's nothing to table because there is no amazing plan. That's the plan? There is no toolbox. You haven't done any of the things that you're on your feet talking about today. You're quick to blame the municipalities, yet your own waste diversion discussion paper that you're talking about says "significant upfront capital expenditures and additional resources would be required" etc., and the province should help out, yet not a penny has gone to help those municipalities. When can municipalities like Toronto with aggressive plans for waste diversion—not idle promises like you're giving—expect their cheque?

**Mr. Wilkinson:** I say to the honourable member opposite in regard to our plan about waste diversion that the first thing we did as a government was to approve making industry cover half the cost of the blue box. In this province, there were many municipalities committed to the blue box that were in danger of losing this most vital and most apparent commitment of people to the 3Rs because of the loss of the blue box. We wanted to make sure that wouldn't happen, so we approved—that has provided millions of dollars to municipalities from industries so that we can support the blue box. I'm sure the member opposite is in support of the blue box.

We're improving composting standards to encourage the development of more composting programs. We're ordering plans, and we've asked the WDO to help us in reducing what things go into landfills: for example, electronic waste. Yesterday, when I was with two young classes from Alliston, it was exciting to be at the waste reduction kickoff where we had the advantage of seeing the great—

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

#### FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS

**Mr. Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls):** My question is to the Minister of Health. I know that one of our government's signature health care initiatives is our family health teams. In April, our government announced the first of 69 family health teams. This was a landmark announcement. I don't have to tell you and members of the House, and in particular the people from my riding, that when I was first elected, for the first three or four months I was inundated with people coming to me because they didn't have a doctor, the most basic need when you're looking for family health care. I know this is a legacy left behind by the previous government, so I'm excited to see our government moving forward to reverse this situation.

In my riding of Niagara Falls there was an excellent application for a family health team submitted by Portage Medical Group. I have thrown my support behind their application. Minister, will this family health team be approved so that it can better serve the care of my constituents in the riding of Niagara Falls?

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** I'm very pleased to have a chance to

speak just a little bit about our family health team initiative. We have already had 213 applications from Ontario communities. We've launched the first 69 of these family health teams, and they're taking shape at various stages but taking shape well in different parts of the province. Soon we're going to move forward with a subsequent wave of announcements related to family health teams and, next year, in our third wave, complete the commitment we made to Ontarians of building 150 family health teams.

I can't confirm today for the honourable member that the initiative he specifically raises a question about is moving forward, but it is there, being considered among the applications that have come forward with a strong degree of provider involvement and a good degree of support from the community. I hope to be in a position to spread the good news of family health teams to further communities soon.

**Mr. Craiton:** I understand that the family health teams are part of our government's larger plan to deliver a better model of health care, where more care is provided in the community and less pressure is on the hospitals. On this note, I'd like to thank you for the announcement and the increase in funding for our home care.

The community care access centre of Niagara received more than \$308 million in increased funding this year to provide home care to my constituents. This means that more of my constituents can receive care at home, where outcomes are better and it means less pressure on the Niagara health system's hospitals that serve my constituents. Minister, can you tell me and everyone in Ontario how this plan works in the big picture for all of our health care system?

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Mr. Smitherman:** When the member from Timmins—James Bay asks a question about health care, it matters, but when the member from Niagara Falls does, apparently it doesn't and he disparages that member.

I'm very proud of the way our government has moved forward in terms of making investments that recognize the interdependency of various sectors in health care. We inherited a circumstance where the legacy of two parties while in government meant that community-based mental health, as one example, didn't even receive base funding increases for more than a decade, while we obviously know that people in communities needed those services.

Our investments in long-term care, in home care, in community support services and family health teams, as well as building on previous capacity related to community health centres, are all designed, along with our focus on prevention, to provide more resources upstream, to get our health care system in a position where it's better able to support people as close to home as possible and focus more of its time on keeping them well in the first place. Associated with that is the potential for the relief of pressure on hospitals, and our announcement with respect to end-of-life care has contributed more in that regard.



## WASTE DISPOSAL

**Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock):** My question is to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment. Yesterday you said, “We have an amazing plan” for dealing with garbage disposal for Toronto and area if the border closes. Just a minute ago you talked about reduce, reuse and recycle. There has to be more to this amazing plan than reduce, reuse and recycle. Could you please share more of the plan with us?

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex):** I want to say to the member opposite, my friend from Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, congratulations on being appointed the critic for the environment by your leader.

I’d be more than happy to share with all the members about this. I want you to know that from the day this government was formed, we’ve been telling those municipalities that ship their waste across an international border that this was not a viable, long-term solution. Given the recent events in the US, the minister met with those communities involved and made it clear that they need to develop a viable, long-term solution to deal with their waste.

Further, I can share that this past Friday the Premier asked the ministry to meet with those municipalities again to get a status report, to get an update on the development of their plans, and those meetings will take place. Finally, I want to assure the member that when municipalities submit their final plans, we will review them at the Ministry of the Environment expeditiously to ensure they meet our very high environmental standards.

**Ms. Scott:** More meetings—we need to get the border working.

We checked the Environmental Bill of Rights postings. There’s no evidence of your amazing plan. We checked the Ministry of the Environment Web site—no evidence of your amazing plan. We checked in every newspaper. There’s no announcement of your amazing plan.

Yesterday the Premier said 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.” It turns out the Premier was amazingly wrong on this point. According to the chair of the Toronto Works committee, if the border closes, the responsibility rests with you, the government, and the municipalities to find an alternative, not the Michigan landfill site. Where exactly does your amazing plan put the Toronto area garbage, should the border close? Can you say? Is it going to Simcoe, Halton, Peel or London?

1510

**Mr. Wilkinson:** I want you to know that we on this side of the House listen to the mayor of the city of Toronto in regard to what is the status of their contract, and not other people. The mayor has been very clear on this point.

The second thing I want you to know—I recall that in the throne speech, and I know the member was listening intently, we talked about the need to reform the

environmental assessment process. The previous government came up with the idea of going to scoped environmental assessments, and what that did was divert all of these environmental assessments into the courts. That made sure, actually, that it was not clear, that it was not efficient, that it was not transparent. So it’s important for us to achieve that, and I look forward to the minister making an announcement shortly about our change in the process of environmental assessment that will make it clear, transparent and efficient.

## ILLEGAL TAXI OPERATORS

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Today, hundreds of city of Toronto cab drivers came to Queen’s Park. They have the support not only of the people of the city of Toronto, but of the council of the city of Toronto and the mayor of the city of Toronto, who wrote to you on September 29 stating their opposition to your Bill 169. The city of Toronto has asked you to withdraw that provision dealing with cab drivers. All the taxi drivers want is fairness, but today, when they asked you to come out to see them, you refused to meet with them. What do they have to do to be treated equally with your favoured limousine drivers?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** Let me start by saying that I greatly value the work of the taxi industry. Over the last two years, I have come to appreciate how hard they work, and I also have come to appreciate the issues that they are facing.

Bill 169 deals with scooping. Scooping happens when an illegal taxi driver picks up a passenger in a jurisdiction in which he is not entitled to pick up the passengers.

This is about public safety. It is about attracting tourism to this industry. We on this side of the House are absolutely committed to deal with this issue. Once we deal with this issue, it will deal with the issues of the taxi industry in a fair and equitable manner and will address most of their concerns.

**Mr. Prue:** Mr. Minister, the only thing we agree on is that these are hard-working men and women. They are the eyes and ears of our streets, they have a dangerous job, and they have low pay.

Last year in this House, I asked you about a photo op in the Brampton Sanjh Savera Weekly in which you and the Premier posed with limo drivers from the airport following a \$200,000 fundraiser and discussions on the issue of scooping. You would not answer my question then; I don’t expect you will answer it today. But my question today is, what rationale do you have to continue this reckless policy in the face of opposition from the mayor, from the council, from the taxi industry and from the 2.5 million people of Toronto?

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** Let me start by saying that this is not a partisan issue; this is an issue about public safety. Let me just quote something that was said at the committee when the hearings were happening on Bill 169. It was Karam Punian who said, “I am a New Democrat.

People of our community do not attend only one party's fundraiser. What happened last time was that a few people attended the Liberal fundraiser, a few people attended the Conservative fundraiser, and some people attended the NDP fundraiser. These people are paying to each and every political party, not only one party."

The picture that you showed to me, you didn't even have the guts to say to me what was actually written on it—just pretend about it.

#### RENEWABLE FUELS

**The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown):** New question. The member for Sault Ste. Marie.

**Mr. David Oraziotti (Sault Ste. Marie):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your election to the Chair.

My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, while you were in Prince township today, which is near my riding of Sault Ste. Marie, you broke ground on the new Prince wind farm project. Can you elaborate on how releasing crown land for wind power development will help our government reach its target of generating 5% of 1,350 megawatts of Ontario's total energy capacity from renewable resources by 2007?

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker:** Order. It's getting a bit noisy. The Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs):** I appreciate the question from the member from Sault Ste. Marie. I think, for the enlightenment of the others, it's actually in your riding, and it was a great honour to be there this morning, as it is just north of the city of Sault Ste. Marie.

This is just the beginning for the Ontario government, to develop clean, efficient, renewable energy. I was very proud to be a part of this and proud that the Ministry of Natural Resources could be part of this project and contributing some crown land. Of the 65 or 66 wind turbines, 16 of them are going to be located on crown land. It has a total of about 502 hectares. This is 99 megawatts of power, enough power to light 20,000 homes—power them totally. This is just the beginning. We have great untapped potential in Ontario. This project is a three-year environmental assessment, and it's ready to go.

**Mr. Oraziotti:** Thank you, Minister. With our government's commitment to phase out coal-fired plants in Ontario, renewable energy sources are going to become even more important to ensure that we can meet Ontario's energy needs. What else is your ministry doing to help our government meet its needs and its commitment to renewable energy by 2007?

**Hon. David Ramsay:** This is all part of our crown land wind and water power strategy that we put out there for almost a year now, and this is one of these that is up and running. At the present time, we have three sites that have received testing approval, and 18 are currently being reviewed by MNR staff. I'm also pleased to

announce for the first time today that we've extended the window of applications for crown land sites to March 31, 2006. In addition, MNR has released an Internet-based Ontario wind resource atlas. This is one of the most comprehensive wind energy maps in the world.

However, wind power isn't the only source of renewable energy in our province. MNR is also actively reviewing proposals for water power facilities across Ontario. Just recently, Hydromega Services became the first applicant from the ministry's competitive site release process to be awarded the opportunity to pursue the required approvals to construct and operate a water power facility on the Kapuskasing River.

#### ILLEGAL TAXI OPERATORS

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** My question is also to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, as you know, hundreds of very frustrated cab drivers were demonstrating before the Legislature today, and I hope you took the time to listen to their concerns. They're concerned about section 4 of Bill 169. You know that this does not level the playing field between the taxi operators and the airport limousine operators. Minister, in that bill, you fine those hard-working drivers as much as \$20,000 for a violation—unconscionable disrespect for hard-working people.

We put forward an amendment that would help to solve this problem. It was done, Minister, in goodwill. It wouldn't change a word of the bill. All it asks you to do is to not proclaim section 4 of Bill 169 and to deal with it under the Municipal Act. Minister, will you do that out of respect for those hard-working taxi drivers whom you aren't listening to?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar (Minister of Transportation):** As I said before, this issue is a province-wide issue. This issue is about public safety. It's about dealing with our tourism and so on.

Let me say that I had the opportunity to meet with Ontario's chiefs of police this morning. I spoke with Donna Moody. She is the deputy chief of police for Niagara region, and she was in the House earlier. This is what she told me: She said that this issue has been growing; it is becoming serious. It started with one town, and now it has spread to three municipalities in Niagara region. We need to deal with the issue.

I also want to make very clear that Bill 169 actually applies to the whole province. It's not for Peel only; it's not for Ottawa only; it's not for Toronto only. It makes the playing field even in the whole of Ontario. By doing that, we have made scooping illegal in this province, which means that people who don't have a valid licence will not be able to pick—

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

1520

**Mr. O'Toole:** Minister, I'm disappointed, along with the cab drivers in Ontario. You're simply miscommunicating the information on the scooping. This isn't

levelling the playing field. This bill enshrines, on your behalf—and I hate to go here, but you have a debt to pay. Some \$200,000 was raised from that event for Dalton McGuinty. I have the citation here, Minister. I'm asking you to do the honourable thing. Simply declare to the House today and to the taxi drivers of this province that you will not give royal assent to section 4 of Bill 169. You know that tomorrow we're debating this bill. John Tory and our government think there are many good things in that bill. You can win here by listening to this party, as well as David Miller, who supports John Tory's position on this.

**The Speaker:** The question has been asked.

**Hon. Mr. Takhar:** I am amazed that the previous government had nine years to deal with this issue, and they didn't do anything about it. Now they are objecting to a real public concern issue that we are addressing in this House. We are taking this issue seriously. We want to ensure that the tourists coming to the province and our cities and travelling are getting into properly licensed cabs. That is why the fine for taxi scooping will rise from \$300 to \$20,000. This issue is about public safety. This issue applies throughout this province, and this government is absolutely committed to making sure that our taxi industry is protected and their concerns are heard.

#### PAROLE SYSTEM

**Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre):** I have a question to the Minister of Community Safety. Folks across Ontario want to know what you find so compelling about Ottawa's parole system. Is it the generous and early release rate or is it the day trips to amusement parks?

**Hon. Monte Kwinter (Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services):** I'm sure the member regrets the fact that he sort of pitched this question that has already been asked, so I'll give him the same answer. We're looking at all ways that we can in our ministry to provide effective, safe services for the people of Ontario. When you consider that on any given day 56,000 offenders are in the community under the Ontario parole and early release program, of those, only 130 are on parole.

There are only three provinces in Canada that have separate parole systems. I have an obligation and a responsibility to take a look at that issue to see whether or not there are efficiencies without in any way compromising public safety. We have not made that decision, but we are certainly looking at that and many other ways that we can provide safe communities for the people of Ontario, but we're also mindful of the fact that we have to get efficiencies.

**Mr. Kormos:** Minister, you know that Ontario's probation and parole officers think it's dangerous to transfer probation and parole responsibility over to the feds. We learned today that Ontario's chiefs of police think it's dangerous to hand probation and parole over to the feds. If you don't want to listen to Ontario's

probation and parole officers, professionals who have served this province well, why won't you at least listen to chiefs of police?

**Hon. Mr. Kwinter:** In fact, I do listen to the chiefs of police. I've met with them already once today, and I'll be meeting with them right after this meeting. But I want to stress to you again, which is really important, that there is confusion when you talk about the federal parole system, which has responsibility for all offenders who have been sentenced to at least two years and up. This is where you get your serious offenders. In Ontario, nobody is in our facilities who has been sentenced to any more than two years less a day. The average length of stay in our facilities is 66 days.

You're trying to portray that one of these offenders, if they get out on parole and they have 66 days in their sentence, is suddenly going to be putting the people of Ontario at risk. Now, I am not in any way demeaning or releasing the idea that there is a need to provide incarceration for those people who have committed a crime. But you have to understand, the people who are in our custody have been sentenced to two years less a day. We are—

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

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

**Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing):** My question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and minister responsible for democratic renewal. Minister, I know that you and the Premier are leading our government's campaign to narrow the \$23-billion gap between what Ontarians contribute to the federal government and what they receive in federal spending. I appreciated your coming to North Bay to speak to our municipal representatives—who included the mayor of Chisholm, the mayor of Powassan, city of North Bay representatives and various representatives from our chamber of commerce—about this issue and how it personally affects each resident of Nipissing.

A new report released yesterday by the independent Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity is just the latest of several independent reports with findings that support our campaign to reduce the \$20-billion gap. Could you comment on the institute's findings and how these impact on your campaign?

**Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal):** I would like to thank the member from Nipissing for her excellent question. I really enjoyed my visit to her riding on September 30 and was pleased that the North Bay and District Chamber of Commerce and the municipal council were so receptive to our message about the importance of addressing the gap.

Yesterday's report by the institute is yet another third-party report that supports our campaign to narrow the \$23-billion gap. Three separate reports by TD Bank, the Bank of Nova Scotia and CIBC have documented the

existence of the gap and the need to address it, as has the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, all three parties of the Legislature and many others. This report is another interesting analysis of the fiscal gap, and I certainly welcome their support for our campaign, because I'm sure we all agree, Mr. Hampton, that what's good for Ontario is good for Canada.

**Ms. Smith:** Thank you, Minister. We certainly enjoyed hosting you in North Bay and Mattawa.

I know the North Bay city council and our local chamber have indicated their support for the need to narrow the gap and make investments in Ontario that will allow our province to continue to be the economic engine of Canada. I did notice, however, that while the IPAC report recognizes that there is a substantial gap, they used the figure of \$16 billion rather than \$23 billion. Can you explain to the House today the difference between the numbers that IPAC has used and those of your own findings?

**Hon. Mrs. Bountrogianni:** Thank you, and that's a very good question. Actually, the institute's report agrees that our number is a good number, a good estimate of the overall difference between federal revenues and expenditures in Ontario, but we used two different methodologies. That is why we have two different numbers.

It is important to note that the institute used a narrower set of data than we did in assessing the gap. For example, our \$23-billion gap estimate includes Ontario's contribution to the federal surplus, which is significant, and our province's share of transfers to non-residents through foreign aid and defence spending, which is significant. The institute's report excludes those areas, and that accounts for the difference between the two numbers.

But what's important here is that yet another report, another institute, agrees that there's a fiscal imbalance between Ontario and the federal government. I welcome all members of this House to support this campaign when representing their constituents in this great province.

#### INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

**Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant):** One and a half years ago, I raised the issue of H5N1, avian flu. The then Minister of Agriculture said in Hansard the next day, "I think it is inappropriate for anyone to fearmonger about the situation that's out there." Acting Premier, do you feel that raising the issue of bird flu is fearmongering?

**Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services):** The appropriate person to ask is the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs):** I would say to the honourable member, who has identified an issue that is very much in the news, that I do appreciate the opportunity to talk to the House about how our government considers these matters, which are beyond our borders at the present time. The honourable member would know that our Premier established the chief veterinarian for Ontario,

who has the responsibility to ensure that the food safety practices we have in the province are effective, current and up to date.

As a result of media reports about events that are happening in other countries, on other continents, I have asked the chief veterinarian to review the practices we have to ensure that the food safety programs we have in place will in fact continue to ensure that we have a very solid food safety system in Ontario. The chief veterinarian will also bring a report to the chief medical officer of health in Ontario.

1530

**Mr. Barrett:** Acting Premier, you may or may not want to refer this one to the Minister of Agriculture. I have another quote from April 15, 2004: "I think it is very unfortunate that we are fearmongering in this province." This is from your Minister of Agriculture of the day.

Acting Premier, I continue to raise this issue. Number one, is bird flu fearmongering? Does your government have a plan? We're not talking about food safety, by the way. As I asked a year and a half ago, where would the birds be disposed of, if necessary? We know Michigan is not going to take them.

**Hon. Mrs. Dombrowsky:** If I may share with the honourable member, food safety and animal safety are all part of the same program. We have the HACCP program in the province of Ontario, which is the hazard analysis critical control points program, so we know our producers on farms and processors are following safety measures to ensure that food in Ontario is safe. We have the establishment by the Premier of the chief veterinarian. I have asked the chief veterinarian to review all the policies we have in place at the present time and also to set up a regular reporting program with the medical officer of health in Ontario.

We believe we have a strong food safety and health protection program in place. We believe it is important to be vigilant, and that is what we're doing.

#### NATIONAL CHILD BENEFIT SUPPLEMENT

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches-East York):** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Yesterday was the National Day of Action to End Child Poverty in Canada. Thousands of parents who receive social assistance and ODSP benefits have to give their baby bonus money back to you. Minister, do you think your actions of continuing to take money from the children of recipients of welfare and ODSP is helping to eradicate poverty, or are you merely contributing to it?

**Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues):** I appreciate the question today, but I have to admit that as the critic in your portfolio I was surprised you were not asking this question yesterday, which was on the day we are celebrating moving away from poverty here in Ontario.

Let me address this issue specifically. The member of the opposition knows that from the moment we became the government, we changed the policy. All increases from the federal government in the national child benefit are being released and left with families. In our first year of government, that was a \$7-million benefit to families. In the second year, it was a \$25-million benefit to families. In addition, I know the member opposite recognizes the collegial approach we are taking to the issues of poverty.

**Mr. Prue:** Madam Minister, the reality is that people on ODSP and welfare are actually worse off today under your government than they were under the government of Mike Harris. You should be ashamed of that. We need to know—we needed to know yesterday, but we ran out of time, unfortunately.

**Hon. George Smitherman (Minister of Health and Long-Term Care):** Because it's a low priority for you.

**Mr. Prue:** No, it isn't a low priority. It's the long questions and the long answers you continually gave on this auspicious day to end child poverty.

Will you commit to end the clawback? There was nothing in the throne speech. Will you do it?

**Hon. Ms. Papatello:** I find it strange that you should speak about priorities to me. You are the last on the list on the questions today in the House. If it was that important, I would expect your leader to be asking these questions. For our party, let me tell you, shame on you for suggesting for a moment that our government is anything like our predecessors. The member opposite will know that for the first time in history, our Ontario government is working with our federal colleagues. It has resulted in a housing agreement. It has resulted in a child care agreement. It has resulted in those elements that have everything to do with how working people need to live. And for those who aren't working, for those who are on social assistance, we increased, for the first time in 12 years, in our first budget—in addition, we have brought in landmark and symbolic changes to finally show some dignity for the people who are on our system in Ontario.

We will do more in our next budget and the one after that.

## PETITIONS

### PROPERTY TAXATION

**Mr. John O'Toole (Durham):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas recreational trailers kept at parks and campgrounds in Ontario are being assessed by the Municipal Property Assessment Corp. (MPAC) and are subject to property taxes; and

“Whereas owners of these trailers are seasonal and occasional residents who contribute to the local tourism economy without requiring significant municipal services; and

“Whereas the added burden of this taxation will make it impossible for many families of modest income to afford their holiday sites at parks and campgrounds;

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

“That the tax not be imposed in 2004” and 2005, “and that no such tax be introduced without consultation with owners of the trailers and trailer parks, municipal governments, businesses, the tourism sector and other stakeholders.”

I am pleased to sign this on behalf of my constituents and those hard-working families in Ontario being dealt a serious blow.

### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr. Michael Prue (Beaches–East York):** I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty, MPP, as leader of the official opposition, made the following commitment: ‘I have committed that a Liberal government will ensure a binding referendum is held to allow local citizens to determine whether or not to dismantle the amalgamated city’; and

“Whereas, in the interest of true democracy, the Minister of Municipal Affairs put the following question to the voters of the city of Kawartha Lakes: ‘Are you in favour of a return to the previous municipal model of government with an upper-tier and 16 lower-tier municipalities?’; and

“Whereas the voters, by a clear majority on a provincially mandated ballot, answered in the affirmative; and

“Whereas the council of the city of Kawartha Lakes has demanded that the province of Ontario honour the results of the 2003 election as it pertains to the minister's question;

“The undersigned demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario act to honour the commitment made by Dalton McGuinty and to respect the will of the people as expressed in a democratic vote, and restore the former municipal structure as stated in the minister's question.”

I am in agreement and would sign the petition as well.

### CREDIT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Mr. Bob Delaney (Mississauga West):** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly from the community in western Mississauga with regard to Credit Valley Hospital, and it reads as follows:

“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 remain publicly owned, publicly controlled, publicly funded and publicly accountable; 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’m very pleased to affix my signature to this petition. I agree with it wholeheartedly, and I’ll ask Andrew to carry it for me.

1540

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford):** I have here a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by a great number of my constituents and by constituents in neighbouring ridings:

“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 on 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 the community agencies in the developmental services sector to address the 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.”

I affix my signature, as I agree with the petition.

#### MACULAR DEGENERATION

**Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls):** I’m pleased to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly on behalf of my riding of Niagara Falls, and thank Ray Wilson, Nicole Taylor, Bernadette Secco and many others for signing it. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas the government of Ontario’s health insurance plan covers treatments for one form of macular de-

generation—wet—and there are other forms of macular degeneration—dry—that are not covered;

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

“There are thousands of Ontarians who suffer from macular degeneration, resulting in the loss of sight if treatment is not pursued. Treatment cost for this disease is astronomical” for most individuals “and adds a financial burden to their lives. Their only alternative is loss of sight. We believe the government of Ontario should cover the treatment for all forms of macular degeneration through the Ontario health insurance program.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

#### AUTISM TREATMENT

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** I present a petition on behalf of thousands of parents who were promised by Dalton McGuinty that if he became Premier, he would extend funding for autism to children beyond the age of six. The petition reads as follows:

“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.”

I affix my signature to the petition.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East):** I’m very proud to be able to put forward this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas, in the interest of true democracy, the Minister of Municipal Affairs put the following question to the voters of the city of Kawartha Lakes: ‘Are you in favour of a return to the previous municipal model of government with an upper-tier and 16 lower-tier municipalities?’; and

“Whereas the voters, by a clear majority on a provincially mandated ballot, answered in the affirmative;

“The undersigned demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario act to respect the will of the people as expressed in a democratic vote, and restore the former municipal structure as stated in the minister’s question.”

I present this petition on behalf of all those people who signed it.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges):** This petition that I’m going to read into the record is signed by Christine and Dieter Bressel of Markham, Ontario. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas the Minister of Community and Social Services has announced plans to close Huronia Regional Centre, home to people with developmental disabilities, many of whom have multiple diagnoses and severe problems that cannot be met in the community;

“Whereas closing Huronia Regional Centre will have a devastating impact on residents with developmental disabilities, their families, the developmental services sector and the economies of the local communities; and

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

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

I’m pleased to affix my signature to this petition.

#### FALLSVIEW CASINO

**Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls):** I’m pleased to present this petition to the House on behalf of my riding of Niagara Falls.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Falls Management Group made numerous commitments to the city of Niagara Falls when it was awarded the Fallsview Casino contract in 1998” by the previous government;

The residents of Niagara Falls state the following:

“Niagara Falls residents are still waiting for the on-site amenities and the off-site attractors” promised. “We believe that the government of Ontario should ensure that all promises made at the time of the awarding of the

contract” by the previous government “be fulfilled” to the residents of Niagara Falls.

I’m pleased to affix my signature to this petition and submit it.

#### MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina):** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty, MPP, as leader of the official opposition, made the following commitment: ‘I have committed that a Liberal government will ensure a binding referendum is held to allow local citizens to determine whether or not to dismantle the amalgamated city’; and

“Whereas, in the interest of true democracy, the Minister of Municipal Affairs put the following question to the voters of the city of Kawartha Lakes: ‘Are you in favour of a return to the previous municipal model of government, with an upper tier and 16 lower-tier municipalities?’; and

“Whereas the voters, by a clear majority on a provincially mandated ballot, answered in the affirmative; and

“Whereas the council of the city of Kawartha Lakes has demanded that the province of Ontario honour the results of the 2003 election as it pertains to the minister’s question;

“The undersigned demand that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario act to honour the commitment made by Dalton McGuinty and to respect the will of the people as expressed in a democratic vote and restore the former municipal structure as stated in the minister’s question.”

I support this petition and I am signing my name to this.

#### HOSPITAL SERVICES

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I have a petition that’s been signed by thousands of people in the Ottawa-Renfrew area opposed to 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, further, to develop a plan to fund new hospitals through public financing”—just like Dalton McGuinty promised—“clearly excluding the privatization of hospital services.”

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

1550

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 17, 2005, on the amendment to 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 third party.

**Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River):** It’s my honour and privilege today to respond on behalf of New Democrats to the speech from the throne.

Before I begin, Speaker, I want to congratulate you on your recent election.

I also want to extend my best wishes to MPPs from all parties as we begin this new session of the Ontario Parliament.

I think we all recognize that Ontario holds limitless opportunities for the people who live here, for all of us who have chosen Ontario as our home. It’s a potential for prosperity that Ontario families embrace. It’s a prosperity that can be shared and enjoyed by everyone, and it should be shared and enjoyed by everyone. It means a strong economy for everyone in every part of the province. It means high-quality public health care for everyone in every part of the province. It means educational opportunity for all. It means safe, strong communities. It means a hydroelectricity plan that makes sense for people no matter where they live in the province. It means respect and dignity for our most vulnerable citizens.

Most recently we’ve seen the spirit of Ontarians working together to make life better for everyone in response to the earthquake that struck India, Pakistan, Kashmir and Afghanistan. I’ve had the opportunity to visit mosques and participate in fundraising for these victims and their families. I’m greatly impressed by the generosity of Ontarians and the resolve to help family and friends suffering so far away.

Shortly after the earthquake, I sent a letter to the Premier and the leader of the official opposition where I proposed that the three of us meet to discuss ways we can work together to help. I extend that offer again today.

Again, I extend our sincerest condolences to those who have suffered pain, grief and loss.

Throne speech day is a key day for the government. It’s the opportunity for the government to outline its agenda for the coming legislative session. It’s supposed to set priorities, establish goals and set out how the government intends to meet its priorities and goals. It’s supposed to be a day of vision and new ideas. Indeed, I think that’s what people were hoping for and expecting from the McGuinty government in their most recent throne speech. Positive change and results for people are things that people expected to be front and centre in the McGuinty government’s throne speech. In fact, real people are looking for real solutions to real challenges and real problems. That’s what people were hoping for. Instead, the people of Ontario got what I could only describe as a hollow, empty throne speech, with no vision, no ideas and certainly no plan. Instead of a plan for positive results for people, ordinary families are told to settle for rehashed promises that the McGuinty government has spent the last two years breaking—broken promises on everything from health care to education to energy to the environment to help for Ontario’s most vulnerable citizens.

In fact, the throne speech underscores something Ontario families have come to know too well of the McGuinty government. The McGuinty government makes promises with ease but then breaks those promises with even greater ease. As a result, people are starting to question whether they can trust anything this government says. People are starting to question whether they can trust this government to fulfill promises—promises made three years ago, promises made two years ago or promises made just last week in the throne speech.

I want to be clear: Ordinary families didn’t start losing faith in Dalton McGuinty and his government and their promises just in this throne speech; they started to lose faith quite a long time ago. The morning of this year’s throne speech, my colleague Michael Prue, the MPP for Beaches–East York, hosted a Shreddies breakfast. He pointed out that the Premier’s reputation as a serial promise-breaker started with the Premier’s first throne speech.

For example, the first promise: This new government made a commitment to maintain personal income tax rates at the current level. In fact, I remember one Dalton McGuinty staring into the television camera and saying, “I won’t raise your taxes.” Within a few months of assuming office, the McGuinty government whacked low- and moderate-income Ontarians with an unfair, regressive health tax, while at the same time cutting vital health services like physiotherapy, chiropractic care and eye care.

A second promise: “Your new government will be entering into new agreements for publicly owned hospitals in Brampton and Ottawa. This will ensure that these facilities are not privately owned.” The result? The new contracts in Brampton and Ottawa are essentially the same as the old contracts signed under the Conservatives.



In fact, the former Conservative health minister said, "I don't see any difference."

Services vital to patient care will be privatized for at least 25 years, and the private consortia stand to make a fortune from the private financing of those hospitals. In fact, one health economist who has looked at it has said that the Brampton hospital will cost, in terms of building the physical structure, about \$525 million, but then he says that because the McGuinty government is going to turn the financing of the hospital over to Bay Street financiers—and they're in it for a profit—they will add \$175 million to the cost of the hospital. So what was a \$525-million hospital becomes a \$700-million hospital, but the additional \$175 million doesn't go to patient care. No; it goes into the pocket of Bay Street financiers.

New Democrats believe that if we have \$10 billion to spend on health care in the province of Ontario, if we can afford to put \$10 billion into the health care budget, then \$10 billion should go to health care. We shouldn't be siphoning off \$2 billion in order to finance the private sector financier friends of the McGuinty government. Money should not be taken from patient care in order to fatten the wallets of Bay Street financiers who happen from time to time to be the friends of the McGuinty government.

#### 1600

Then there's the promise, "Your new government will do its part to ensure all of our businesses can operate in a stable climate, by delivering reliable, affordable electricity." What is the result? This is clearly a broken promise. Skyrocketing hydro costs are killing good jobs across Ontario. In fact, last year Ontario lost 42,000 good-paying, stable manufacturing jobs. Officials with General Motors report that their electricity costs are 93% higher this July than for the same month a year ago. In northern Ontario, the forest industry, which is the primary driver of the northern Ontario economy, is in crisis because of the McGuinty government's policy of driving up hydro-electricity rates—in fact, driving them through the roof.

Even before this new throne speech from the McGuinty government, ordinary citizens across the province knew that the McGuinty government doesn't keep its promises, and they understand that they shouldn't believe this government now because this government hasn't been believable over the last two years.

I want to deal with some specifics of the throne speech. If the Premier was looking to regain the trust of Ontario families, this throne speech doesn't get the job done. This throne speech in and of itself contains 60 promises that the Premier has spent the last two years breaking. In terms of new promises, ordinary families didn't get a bold vision or new ideas. Instead, what they heard from the throne speech was something that the government calls a "money-back" invitation. The last time somebody said to me, "If it doesn't work, I'll give you your money back," was when somebody was trying to sell me a used car. The statement went something like this: "If you don't believe that this lemon will still run, I'll give you your money back." That is hucksterism.

That isn't a plan; that isn't a vision; that is used-car hucksterism, and that's what people across Ontario heard loud and clear from the throne speech. Public relations gimmicks, hucksterism, are not now and never will be a substitute for good, sound public policy.

I just want to note the differential for people. You see, there are all kinds of people in Ontario who can't afford to have a computer and Internet service in their own homes. They can't afford the \$1,500 or \$2,000 for even a used computer and they can't afford the monthly charges for Internet service. So they have to apply for a birth certificate the way we have customarily applied. They fill out the forms and send them to the registrar general's office. What service will those people get? And we know what the historical record is: They will wait more than six months. In many cases they'll be told by the McGuinty government, "Oops, sorry. We lost your application, and we lost the application money. Send more money and send in another application," and this is after six or eight months. Do you know what? That is the service that lower- and modest-income people will still get from the McGuinty government. The McGuinty government thinks it fair, though, if you can afford to have a computer at home and can afford to have Internet service, that you get a superior level of service.

This hucksterism tells us a lot about the McGuinty government. If you can afford Internet service and you can afford to have a computer at home, the McGuinty government cares about you. But if you don't have sufficient income to buy that computer and keep it at home and have Internet service, you can wait and wait for something as essential as a birth certificate. This is hucksterism, but this hucksterism tells us a lot about whom the McGuinty government really cares about.

Despite this hucksterism by the McGuinty government, in general Ontarians are optimistic. They're optimistic because in general our people are highly skilled, they're highly motivated, they're highly educated and they're caring, compassionate people who want to make life better for everyone in this province. They understand that now is the time for new ideas to meet the new demands of a growing, wonderfully diverse population and the complicated challenges facing our province. But the approach of the last two years—excuses and broken promises and always finding someone else to blame—that approach by the McGuinty government hasn't worked.

I wonder what the average Ontarian thinks when, whenever there's a problem, the McGuinty government blames the Martin government in Ottawa. It recurs, over and over again. The McGuinty government said that they could put money into health care, money into education, money into social services and money to protect the environment, and they said they wouldn't have to raise taxes. Now, when they're caught, they wave the finger at the federal government and say, "It's your fault." When I ask a simple question, as I did today about what the plan is to store nuclear waste, what's the response from the McGuinty government? "That's a federal responsibility, the federal government's fault."

I wonder, what does the average Ontarian think when they see the McGuinty Liberals here blaming the Martin Liberals in Ottawa, and then, when the Martin Liberals in Ottawa get caught, they blame the McGuinty Liberals in Ontario? I wonder what people think of this nonsensical game where, whenever this government can't keep its promises or won't keep its promise, it looks for someone else to blame, in many cases this government's own federal cousins in Ottawa.

I think that people become dispirited; I think that people become disillusioned. It would be far better if this government simply stood up and said, "You know what? We can't keep these promises because we're unwilling to raise tax revenue; we're unwilling to do the things that would be necessary to put the funding into education, to put the funding into social services, to put the funding into protecting the environment."

Rather than going through this silly game of constantly blaming the federal Liberals in Ottawa—I wonder if ordinary folks across Ontario know that the Premier's own brother is a federal Liberal MP. When the Premier goes out to help his federal Liberal MP brother get re-elected in Ottawa and then, just a couple of months later, turns around and says, "It's the federal government's fault"—how silly; how nonsensical. But that has become their favourite policy. Mr. Peterson over here, who I can only assume also likes blaming his brother in Ottawa, who sits as a federal Liberal cabinet minister—how nonsensical.

Do you realize how ridiculous you look? Whenever you get in trouble, you want to blame your cousins, your brothers, your distant relatives, your former staff who are now part of the federal Liberal government. Far better for you to show some leadership; far better for you to take some responsibility rather than going through this silly game of pretending one minute that the Liberals in Ottawa are somehow the bogeymen, the bad guys, and the next instant, two or three months later, you're out there fundraising for them and trying to get them re-elected again. Drop the charade. Drop the games.

A lot of this doesn't make sense to ordinary families across Ontario. It doesn't make sense to them because, for almost everyone I talk to across this province, their experience is that under the McGuinty government they are working harder and they are working longer, but at the end of the month, when they add up the paycheque and the bills, they have less.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina):** It's getting worse and worse.

**Mr. Hampton:** And it's getting worse, and it's especially getting worse for the lowest-income people in Ontario.

I can remember when the members of the McGuinty Liberal team used to criticize the former Conservative government and say that the former Conservative government was mean-spirited and nasty when it came to the lowest-income Ontarians. But I can tell you that it is worse under the McGuinty government. It is worse: The hydro bill has increased, the heating bill has increased

and the rental bill has increased. If you're trying to send your kids off to college or university, the cost of doing that has increased. But the income hasn't increased.

**1610**

The promise to end the clawback: If ever there was a government that shows itself to be morally bankrupt, that promise to end the clawback, to stop taking federal money out of the pockets of the poorest, the lowest-income Ontarians, and then right after the election to deny that this government had ever made that promise, to continue to take federal money out of the pockets of the lowest-income Ontarians, is disgraceful. It is nothing less than disgraceful. And to do that in the context of the Premier saying before the last election that it was immoral—immoral—to have this kind of clawback, that it was wrong, it was immoral, and to say that a Liberal government would end it, and now to continue it, is certainly disgraceful.

So here is the reality for the majority of Ontarians. They are working longer. They are working harder. In many cases, it's not one job; it's one job during the day, another job in the evening and another job on the weekend, trying to make ends meet, trying to pay the rent, put food on the table and look after their kids. What's their experience? That it is more difficult now under the McGuinty government than it was even before under the former Conservative government, despite all the holier-than-thou and sanctimonious promises from this Liberal government that it was going to make a difference for the lowest-income Ontarians.

I want to talk just for a minute about something that we know is a critical issue facing Ontario. Ontario is an industrial province. Ontario's economy is based upon our manufacturing. Whether it be manufacturing autos and auto parts, steel and other kinds of manufacturing in southern Ontario or whether it be the manufacturing of pulp and paper and lumber and other metal products in northern Ontario, this is a manufacturing province. Let's make no mistake, manufacturing requires energy. It requires affordable energy, a reliable supply of energy.

What were people told by the McGuinty government before the last election? One of the things they were told is that the McGuinty government was going to freeze hydro rates into 2006. That was one of the promises. And what's happened to people's hydro bills since? People's hydro bills have skyrocketed.

General Motors tells the story for industry. Their hydro bill this July as compared to last July is up by 93%. If you want to compare a paper mill in Ontario with a paper mill in Quebec or a paper mill in Manitoba, a paper mill in northern Ontario now has a monthly hydro-electricity bill that is double—double—what a paper mill would pay in Quebec, Manitoba or British Columbia. If it's a \$1-million-a-month hydro bill in Quebec, Manitoba or British Columbia, it's a \$2-million-a-month hydro bill in Ontario. And this from a government that said it was going to freeze hydroelectricity rates into 2006, this from a government that promised it was going to freeze hydro rates into 2006.

What's the result of that broken promise? The result is—and we see it all across northern Ontario—400 jobs lost in the city of Kenora, in my riding, because the paper mill is shutting down; another 150 jobs lost at the Cascades mill in Thunder Bay because the paper mill is shutting down a machine; another 30 jobs lost at a chemical plant in Thunder Bay because they can't afford to pay the hydro bill any further.

What are they doing? They're going to move the operation into Manitoba. What is Cascades going to do with their paper operation in Thunder Bay? They're going to shut down production at that mill in Thunder Bay and move production, shared between Quebec and Manitoba. There are another 175 jobs at the Norampac mill in Red Rock, and what's Norampac going to do? They are going to move production to Quebec. There are another 150 jobs at Terrace Bay, because they've shut down a mill there. All of this is under the watch of the McGuinty government. Is the McGuinty government doing anything to address these issues? In fact, they're making the problem worse.

Let me tell you the reality for people who live in northwestern Ontario. Northwestern Ontario isn't even part of the southern Ontario electricity grid system. People who live in northwestern Ontario are part of a separate grid. That's why, in the blackout of the summer of 2003 when the lights went out all across southern and northeastern Ontario, the lights stayed on west of Wawa, because there's only a very small linkage. What does that mean? What it means is the McGuinty government could shut down every paper mill, every pulp mill, every sawmill, every mining operation, and yes, the McGuinty government is doing that, and as a result of shutting down all those operations and putting thousands of people out of work and decimating the local economies, which the McGuinty government is doing on a consistent basis, they could have a surplus of 1,000 megawatts of electricity in northwestern Ontario. You know what? That electricity would just sit there, because you can't take it anywhere, you can't move it anywhere. You couldn't move it to southern Ontario. You couldn't move it into the United States. You can't move it to Quebec. You can't move it to Manitoba.

So what's the rationale for forcing paper mills, pulp mills, sawmills, mining operations in northwestern Ontario, many of which are located five kilometres, 10 kilometres away from a hydroelectricity dam where electricity is produced for \$10 a megawatt, what's the McGuinty government's rationale for forcing those paper mills to pay \$80 and \$90 a megawatt for that electricity that costs only \$10 a megawatt to produce a short way down the river? Is it going to lead to more energy efficiency or more energy sustainability in southern Ontario? No. You can't move the electricity from there to here. Is it going to somehow create a new industry to replace it for the tens of thousands of people who lose their jobs, the tens of thousands of families who have lost everything they've worked for? Is it going to do anything for that? No. It's a completely irrational policy.

We saw just the other day the province of Quebec taking some action to ensure that forest sector jobs in that province are sustainable. What have we seen from the McGuinty government? Well, we saw in June this promise of loan guarantees. What was the response of the industry? The industry said, "This is no help. The last thing we need is a McGuinty government telling us to take on more debt. The last thing we need is the McGuinty government designing a strategy to help us take on more debt." The first response of the McGuinty government was a complete non-starter.

So then the Minister of Natural Resources said, "We're going to come forward with a strategy," a few months later. They made another announcement, but did that announcement deal with this disparity in electricity rates? Did it treat those paper mills, pulp mills and sawmills any more fairly? No, it didn't address the issue at all.

In fact, what's happening is that tens of thousands of workers, people who do their job, who get up every morning, who go to work, who pay their taxes, who contribute to their community, who are responsible citizens of Ontario, are being put out of work by a McGuinty government policy that is grossly unfair to them. What is the response from the Premier? The Premier tries to say that this is somehow globalization. It's not globalization that is forcing people who live in northern Ontario, that is forcing paper mills in northern Ontario that are only 10 or 20 kilometres away from a hydro dam that provides electricity at \$10 a megawatt, to pay \$80 or \$90 a megawatt for that electricity. It is the McGuinty government first, last and always, and it's the McGuinty government that's responsible for killing jobs, for shutting down paper mills, and for decimating communities across northern Ontario.

#### 1620

I want to talk about what we've seen of the so-called McGuinty government electricity plan over the last two years, because if ever there were a case of not just broken promises but of, frankly, holding photo ops and spinning out press releases that make absolutely no difference for people—in fact, make the situation worse—that's what this government has been doing. As we have seen over the last two years, this is a government that talks about a culture of conservation, but no one is seeing anything remotely like a conservation strategy or policy. This is a government that likes to use the buzzwords of "energy efficiency" but has no plan for energy efficiency.

If you lived in Manitoba right now, or the province of Quebec, neither of those provinces is short of electricity—in fact, they both have surpluses—but they take this issue seriously. If you lived in Manitoba today and were a homeowner, you could get a \$5,000 low-interest loan so you could afford to go out and reinsulate your home so that it uses less electricity or less natural gas. You could use that loan to put in high-efficiency, energy-efficient windows. You could use that loan to purchase home appliances, like a refrigerator, that are energy-efficient so that you actually reduce your electricity con-

sumption. Then, by reducing your electricity consumption and your natural gas consumption because you've got a more energy-efficient home, with whatever money you save on your hydro bill every month, you can use that to pay off the loan.

If you live in Quebec, the same thing prevails. Quebec, which has a surplus of electricity, has an energy efficiency plan whereby Quebec residents can reinsulate their homes, can install efficient electrical appliances, can put in energy-efficient windows. As a result of reducing their electricity and gas consumption and saving money, they can use that money to pay off the low-interest loan.

Is that happening in Ontario? Do we have anything like that kind of thoughtful energy efficiency strategy from the McGuinty government? No. A government that boasts about conservation, that boasts about having a culture of conservation, that uses the buzzwords of "energy efficiency," has no such strategy whatsoever. None. No strategy.

Every once in a while, though, when the public becomes aware of this, this government holds another photo op. The last photo op—and it was embarrassing to anybody who thought about it—was the former Minister of Energy basically standing before a map, and this was his essential message: that someday, maybe, perhaps, possibly, Ontario might purchase electricity from Labrador—someday, maybe, perhaps, possibly. Well, you know what? That will take 20 years. What are people across Ontario to do in the next 20 years: watch the hydro bill skyrocket through the roof, watch themselves and family members lose their jobs? That is the depth—or the lack of depth, the complete superficiality—of the McGuinty government's so-called hydroelectricity plan: that it might someday, perhaps, maybe, possibly purchase some electricity from Labrador, 20 years down the road.

**Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):** Manitoba too, Howard.

**Mr. Hampton:** Well, the Manitoba one is even more fun, because this is a government, I swear, that at least 12 times now has held press conferences, photo ops, talking about the fact that they might buy electricity from Manitoba. Yet when I talk to officials in Manitoba, they say, "Nothing's signed." The McGuinty government talks about it a lot, the McGuinty government refers to it a lot, but no deal, no contract. This is another of those, "Someday, possibly, perhaps, maybe the McGuinty government might purchase some electricity," after they've driven the hydro bill through the roof in Ontario and after they've signed another cozy deal for private, profit-driven nuclear power at Bruce. It's something they say is a \$4.5-billion deal, but when you find out that the electricity consumers of Ontario are on the hook for cost overruns—and yes, there are always cost overruns at the refurbishment of a nuclear plant—and the McGuinty government is going to give this private, profit-driven company a \$60-million-a-year reduction on the lease payments they're supposed to make, it amounts to a \$6.5-billion boondoggle.

No wonder Bruce Power is going to Bay Street, Wall Street and Fleet Street in the city of London boasting

about what a great deal they got from the McGuinty government, a \$2-billion giveaway side deal on top of the principal deal. If I were Bruce Power, I'd be boasting about that too on my way to the bank. Good deal for Bruce Power; incredibly expensive hydro rates for the people of Ontario. But I guess that is the McGuinty government's real electricity plan: Go nuclear, go big and go private.

**Mr. Marchese:** That's it.

**Mr. Hampton:** That's it. After two years of trying to hide that fact, that is the McGuinty government's plan for electricity in this province.

Also in the context, though, I want to ask about what happened in 2004. You see, what we know now is that in 2004, almost two years ago, electricity consumers in this province were overcharged by the McGuinty government to the tune of \$528 million. That's how much people were overcharged.

When someone is overcharged, when the rules say you're only supposed to be charged this much, but then this huckster comes along and charges you this much, the money should be returned. If I heard the throne speech about, you know, the money-back guarantee, those consumers in Ontario who were overcharged to the tune of \$528 million should have gotten their money back. This was known in February. February passed, March passed, April passed, May passed, and June, July, August and September, and now we're into October. Nine months have passed, and have the people gotten their money back from the McGuinty government? No—nowhere to be seen.

So when the McGuinty government says, "This will be a good deal for you and you'll get your money back," don't you believe them. They've been hanging on to the people's money for nine months. I repeat, this is not the McGuinty government's money; this money belongs to the hydro consumers of Ontario. They should have gotten their money back. But the hucksters who say, "Try the deal or we'll send you the money back" aren't returning the money. They're hanging on to the money. This tells you, once again, a lot about the McGuinty government.

I want to go on to another issue which I think is very important. In fact, if you do some polling or some opinion research, most Ontarians will tell you that this is the most important issue for them. It's called health care.

We had a very unusual decision come out of the Supreme Court of Canada. In fact, I think it's a bad decision, but it's a decision nonetheless. It's a decision that originates in Quebec. It's called the Chaoulli ruling and it's a very big threat to medicare. In fact, health care experts, medicare experts, not just across Ontario but across Canada, have said this is a very serious issue. I thought we would see in the throne speech a definitive statement from the McGuinty government that they were going to take this on, that they were going to protect Ontario's publicly funded, publicly administered health care system from further privatization, that they were going to ensure that medicare was sustained.

Did we see any such statement? Did we see any plan? Did we see any vision in the throne speech to do that? No; none whatsoever; no defence for medicare whatsoever in the McGuinty government's throne speech. In fact, instead of a defence, what we're seeing is the McGuinty government patting itself on the back for private financing of hospitals, inviting the Bay Street financiers into our hospitals, inviting the Bay Street financiers to take money out of the health care budget, not for patient care, but to line their own pockets.

1630

What's the history of these private financing hospitals? This is something that Margaret Thatcher brought to Great Britain. It's very interesting to read the history of what has gone on there, because what has happened is this: Private corporations who get involved with the financing of hospitals, their primary interest is, "How much money can we make?" Their secondary—it's not even the secondary. Their tertiary interest is the quality of the health care system.

Let me just give you one example of a private financing hospital in Britain. This one happened, I believe, near Edinburgh. The private financing company got wind that it could pick up some cheap land. The cheap land was over abandoned mine sites. So in these private financing deals, this is all under their control. If they can assemble cheap land, better for them—maybe not better for the hospital or the health care system, but better for them. So they purchased this land that was over an abandoned mine, and that's where they built this private financing hospital.

The McGuinty government will tell you that this was a fine project because it was delivered on time and on budget. But you know what? When it rains, the tunnels in the mine fill up with water, and the rats who live in the mine come out of the mine. And guess where they go? They go into the hospital. Here is a hospital that now spends a major part of its operating budget trying to keep the rats out of the hospital.

But when I asked the government's Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal if this was a good deal, you know what he said? He said that the hospital was finished on time and on budget. Imagine. Would you want to send someone in your family who was ill into that hospital when they might wake up from surgery, they might wake up in the middle of the night, and who's there cozying up to them in bed? Not the nurse, but a big rat.

This is what the McGuinty government portrays as being good for health care in Ontario. But that's not the only example. There was another one of these private financing hospitals, farther south in England, where the company, the private financing company that was paying for the hospital and arranging for the construction, discovered that they could save money—they could make money—by doing some innovative things with the sewage system in the hospital. So they did these innovative things, and you know what? It did cost less money to build the sewage system, given this innovation that they brought. That's one of the selling points that the

McGuinty government talks about. They say, "Oh, this private financing is going to lead to innovation." But you know what was really innovative about this? There are a lot of fluids in hospitals that you need to dispose of in a safe way, because if you don't, they can contaminate the hospital and they can lead to serious health problems, not only for other patients, but for workers. This private financing hospital was so innovative that when physicians are washing their hands to prepare for surgery, it's not unusual that they see blood gurgle up in the sink. This was the innovation of this private financing project.

I asked the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, who promotes this, "Is this a good deal?" You know what his response was? "The hospital was constructed on time and on budget," as if to say it doesn't matter if the sewage system leads to health problems, leads to disinfection problems and, frankly, leads to a situation where you wouldn't want to put someone from your family—and I can certainly tell you that I would never want someone from my family in that hospital, not as a patient or working there either. But this is what the McGuinty government says is going to be a fine model for our hospital system.

At a time when medicare needs to be defended, at a time when medicare needs to be sustained, what is the McGuinty government going to do? They're going to invite the private sector, they're going to invite Bay Street financiers to repeat in Ontario the same sorry experience that you now see as part of the historical record in Great Britain. Then there's the increased privatization that we actually see just in the OHIP plan. I remember Dalton McGuinty saying before the election that under a McGuinty government there would be no cuts to health care.

I want to tell you about the kind of communities that I represent, communities where people work very, very hard, where it's not unusual that people will get up at 3 o'clock in the morning and be out in the forest working as loggers at 5 in the morning. They'll put in a 10- or 11-hour day. It's tough work, and in some cases it's dangerous work. A lot of those workers, because it's such back-breaking work, such difficult work, need access to a chiropractor. Do you know what? Access to a chiropractor used to be one of those insured services under OHIP until Dalton McGuinty cut it.

Despite his promise of no cuts to health care, one of the first things they did was cut health care. What does it mean? A lot of these people who need chiropractic care in order to be able to go to work on an ongoing basis, in order to continue to have some mobility, in order to continue to work and be productive, have been cut off. They've been told that this no longer matters in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. Yes, some people can afford it out of their own pocket, but other people can't. Other people cannot afford to pay those bills. They don't have extra money in their pocket. This is what the McGuinty government calls a defence of medicare.

Then there's optometry. I want to tell you about the reality in my part of Ontario. I suspect it's the reality in

your part of Ontario, Speaker, where you have a lot of aboriginal people. One of the best ways, one of the first ways to diagnose that someone may be suffering from diabetes is an examination by an optometrist. An optometrist can tell by examining someone's eyes if they are in the initial stages of diabetes. By making that diagnosis, they can save the health care system literally millions of dollars, because, Speaker, you must know that diabetes that is not recognized, that is not treated very early, can result in all kinds of health complications. It can result in a heart attack; it can result in blindness; it can result in limb amputation—all those complications.

I don't think I need to tell you that those kinds of things cost the health care system millions of dollars. When you start amputating limbs, when you have to follow a regime where someone has suffered a heart attack or a stroke, when you have to deal with issues like blindness, that can involve millions of dollars in treatment costs.

What does the McGuinty government do? Instead of continuing to ensure that optometry is an insured service within our OHIP, our medicare system, the McGuinty government cuts it. The same situation: Yes, there are some people who can afford to pay whatever the fee is themselves, but there are lots of people who cannot afford to pay it. I can tell you, Speaker, in the part of Ontario that you're from and the part of Ontario that I'm from, there are tens of thousands of aboriginal people who cannot afford to pay it. They are especially at risk of the complications of diabetes. Did the McGuinty government protect medicare there? Did they sustain medicare there? No, they cut it, to the detriment of the health of hundreds of thousands of people in Ontario, a decision that, when the full complications are known, is going to cost the health care system down the road millions of dollars more because we will be dealing with people who are suffering from blindness, we will be dealing with more heart attacks, we will be dealing with more strokes and we will be dealing with more limb amputations and everything that goes along with that—a terrible decision, an indefensible decision by a government that said it was not going to cut health care in Ontario.

**1640**

Then there's the whole issue of private cancer clinics. I want to be very clear with people about what's going on here. If, in private cancer clinics, if you have a thick wallet, you can get to the front of the line, or you might be able to get treatment that is not available to someone else, it seems to me the situation is simple here; there's a very simple test. If the medications, the drugs and the treatment plans being advertised by those private cancer treatment centres are found in other provinces to contribute to better health and are found by other, independent tests to contribute to the treatment of cancer, those should be insured services in Ontario. By definition, we should not have in Ontario one tier of treatment for people who have thick wallets and a lesser tier of treatment for people who do not have thick wallets and have to depend upon the medicare system.

What has the McGuinty government said about this? What has the McGuinty government done about this? They have tried to ignore the whole issue. They have tried to pretend that this is not an issue at all. Is this a defence of medicare? Is this a defence of publicly funded, publicly administered health care? I think, by any test, not at all.

In a similar situation, once again I was looking for some vision, some direction, some plan, some ideas in the throne speech. I'm talking about the issue of garbage; 15 years ago it was Toronto's garbage. There obviously is no space within the city of Toronto to store garbage. Most of it is now developed land or potentially developable land. So in that period of time it was a question of where in the greater Toronto area Toronto's garbage could be disposed of. Now it's not just Toronto; it's the whole greater Toronto region. It has become a much bigger problem.

I was looking in the throne speech. I thought that surely there must be a statement of a plan here, because what's happening now, with the greater Toronto area's garbage being shipped to Michigan—I may be wrong, but given what I'm reading out of the Congress of the United States and what I hear out of the mouths of political representatives from Michigan, I would say it's very likely that Toronto's garbage very soon is either going to be refused or severely restricted at the Ontario border with Michigan. Is there a plan from the McGuinty government? Is there an idea, is there a concept, is there a strategy, anything, in the throne speech? Nothing.

I thought at least we would see the government move forward just a little bit on what it said before the election. They said before the election that they were going to have an ambitious plan for waste reduction, that they were going to have an ambitious plan to ensure that there was not only reduction but reuse and recycling, and that they were going to financially assist municipalities to do this. I thought that at least there would be a reference in the throne speech about some concrete things that were being done. Was there any reference to that? No. In fact, when the Premier is asked about this, he wants to pretend that this isn't happening in Ontario, that somehow this is not something that the government needs to respond to. He has the audacity to say that the municipality has to look after it. The municipality of Toronto doesn't have the legal authority to require another municipality in Ontario to take their garbage; Mississauga doesn't have the legal authority to require someone to look after their garbage; and it's the same with York region and Durham region. They do not have the legal authority to require someone to enter into an agreement with them to facilitate it. Clearly what's needed here is a provincial plan, clearly what's needed here is the McGuinty government to take on the responsibility of governing, but what do we see? In the throne speech we see an attempt by the McGuinty government to pretend that this isn't even an issue.

Another area I want to talk about a bit is education. Boy, this government spares no end of propaganda trying

to convince people that they really care about education. I remember before the last election hearing from not just the Premier but from just about everybody who sat in the Liberal caucus that the funding formula for our elementary and secondary schools had to be corrected, that under the former Conservative government there was gross underfunding of elementary and secondary schools. There was just commitment after commitment after commitment that a McGuinty government would improve and correct the funding formula.

We're now two years into the McGuinty government, and wherever I go I ask people who sit on boards of education, I ask teachers and I ask parents, "Have you seen a difference in the funding formula?" Do you know what they tell me? What they tell me is this: They're even more hard-pressed now. They tell me that, instead of more funding for special education, instead of being able to do more on English as a second language, instead of being able to do more in terms of meeting the real, day-to-day needs of students in the classroom, they're actually taking money out of the special education budget; they're taking money out of the English-as-a-second-language budget. Do you know why? They take it out to pay the hydro bill; they take it out to pay the heating bill. Why? Because the funding formula that was supposed to be corrected and changed under the McGuinty government hasn't been corrected and changed. So, as the hydro bill goes up, as it doubles, there's no allocation for that. As the heating bill goes up, there's no allocation for that. As the insurance industry spreads the loss, whether it be from Hurricane Katrina or some other disaster, and schools find that their insurance costs are going up, there's no money in the budget for that. So boards of education end up taking money which was supposed to meet the needs of students just to keep the lights on, keep the building heated and pay the insurance bill.

The Premier and the Minister of Education want people to believe that there are going to be smaller classes, that there are going to be more teachers in the schools. So I've asked directors of education about that too. I've said, "How does this work?" They've said, "Well, actually it doesn't work right now." There was no additional money in the budget a year ago and there's very little additional money in the budget this year—certainly not enough to meet the hydro costs, the heating costs and the additional insurance costs. There might be a little bit of money next year, but where all the money has to show up is in the spring of 2007. This has all been back-loaded.

What that means is that our schools are essentially living another McGuinty promise. They don't know if the money that was promised is going to be there in 2007 or not. They're operating on a hope and a prayer. They're desperate that there be some new money by 2007; otherwise, they are really in trouble. They will not have enough money to pay salaries of existing teachers now, never mind new, additional teachers, never mind covering the cost of English as a second language or special education or all the other things that have to be addressed. Once again, even in this area of education, what

it really boils down to is that while the money might be there in 2007—and schools are hopeful, they are prayerful, that it will be there in 2007—frankly, they don't know. They have no idea for sure that the money is going to be there.

**1650**

I just want to talk a bit about the environment. I want to talk about the environment because, again, we were told by this government before the election and during the election that they were really going to make a difference for the environment. I searched this throne speech to see how often the environment was mentioned. You know what? The environment was hardly there. It was as if the issue of the environment, like the garbage, didn't exist any more. It wasn't on the agenda. What I heard right after the throne speech is the McGuinty government's announcement that they want to store more nuclear waste in Ontario, nuclear waste that is toxic to human life for thousands of years. But in the throne speech, I didn't hear a peep about the environment. Again, I say to people, watch these promises, these promises that are routinely broken.

I have to conclude. Let me simply say this to people: It should be obvious by now that the McGuinty government does make promises with ease. This is a government that makes all the right speeches. They say all the right things, but they don't deliver. This is a government that doesn't deliver. This is a government that finds it, oh, so easy to promise: to promise that they're going to extend treatment to autistic kids and then after the election turn their back and pretend that parents with autistic children over five years old don't exist. This is a government that doesn't deliver. It says all the right things, says them over and over again, holds all the photo ops, holds the photo ops over and over again, gives all the right speeches, and then doesn't deliver.

So I say to people across Ontario, here we go. You heard the fine words in the throne speech, you heard the repetition of promises, but watch and listen carefully, because I'm afraid what you are going to find is that once again, despite all the speeches, despite all the promises, the McGuinty government isn't going to deliver. This will be another year of broken promises; another year of blaming someone else; another year of excuses.

Thank you for your time, Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Dave Levac (Brant):** Speaker, just before I begin my speech, I would like to let you know that I'll be sharing my time with the member from Perth—Middlesex.

The opportunity to speak to the issue is very important because we're talking about the throne speech. I did a little homework. I scanned previous throne speeches over the last 10 or 15 years. By way of explanation of throne speeches, I think people should be made aware that this is somewhat of a template of how the boat wants to be steered to move it forward. So in terms of the document itself, people are spending quite a bit of time in saying, "Well, it didn't say specifically how much money you were going to spend." They are saying stuff like, "You

didn't outline every single thing you are planning to do as a government."

The throne speech is basically the catalyst for the debates, the catalyst for the creation of the bills and the catalyst for the vision that governments have. Previous governments have laid out throne speeches that changed the direction. Some throne speeches in my research basically talked about staying the course. Some other throne speeches talked about a specific or the odd idea that they were focusing on and made it their priority in their government during that particular term.

I just wanted to make it clear that throne speeches are that, indeed: the idea of how you present the vision and what you're going to do to get there. So I want to make reference to that right off the bat and explain some of the things that have happened. I appreciate the opportunity for us to debate that. We've heard two opposing views of what the throne speech is all about. I plan to present a couple of ideas that one of the members opposite gave us.

As far as the NDP is concerned, and I know the member from Whitby would agree with me on this, it's strictly, "The sky is falling. There is absolutely nothing significant happening in the government of Ontario." In terms of governance, my concern with the characterization of "The sky is falling" is that there was very little come-back.

But the one thing that I know he would also agree with me on is the fact that their solution in his response, if you heard it clearly—because I wasn't quite sure if he wanted to say it cryptically or whether he was coming right out and saying it—was that we want to increase taxes big time. We want to take and put those taxes as high as we can and start raising them so that we can have an opportunity to do that. So I'm concerned with that. I know the member opposite is a very large champion of that and actually, quite to his credit, never leaves that course and basically talks about tax cuts everywhere and anywhere he can and explains to us that the social side of his economic vision is better served by completely having tax cuts right through. After eight years, that's why we ended up with a budget deficit of \$5.2 billion.

We need to discuss the balance that's being presented in this, the balance that—

**Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre):** It was \$6.2 billion.

**Mr. Levac:** It was \$6.2 billion originally. We've brought that down, and I'll talk about that in a couple of minutes too, my member from Ottawa.

One of the things that I think we need to talk about explicitly, in my opportunity, is education. When I talk about education, I want to talk about my 25 years in education in my riding. I'm not going to pretend to stand in front of you and say that I know exactly what's going on in every single board. Some people would have you believe they've called every single director of education and got the scoop as to exactly what's happening in every classroom in the province of Ontario.

The minister has made it quite clear that this government does not want to micromanage from Queen's Park.

They want to devolve some of that decision-making into the classrooms. One of the beliefs that we've articulated since 2003—even before that, but that got us elected in 2003—was class sizes in the primary divisions, from junior kindergarten to grade 3. There is evidence all over the place—except for the fact that it's not acknowledged that the investment's made not on the board's dollar but on the province's dollar—that 2,400 new teachers have been hired to articulate that particular vision of bringing those class sizes down. We've reached somewhere around the 40% rate, and sooner or later—I hope sooner, quite frankly—we'll reach the 100% mark where we have all of our classrooms at that level of 20 students per classroom, with a variance. I think the variance is one student or two students, but those negotiations are ongoing with directors of education.

Quite frankly, we want to take a step even in front of that. One of the things that the throne speech did talk about clearly—and let me put the four pillars together for us so that it explains exactly where this vision is taking us and the fact that it's going to take us a while to get there. But we're going to be seeing success and it's going to be measured, with results expected at the end of the term. That's very clearly laid out. It's laid out in a platform, it's laid out right across the board on several occasions, and I'll lay it out again. There are going to be results expected at the end of the term.

Here are the four pillars.

Young children will be ready to learn when they arrive in school for the first time: an unprecedented investment in what's called Best Start. That means that we have identified where kids do their best learning. McCain and Mustard have made it quite clear. I was privy to research from about 20 years ago that was saying the same thing, so it's not as if this is brand new, but to quantify it in science is a good thing to do. That's exactly what happened in terms of brain development and all of the things that are necessary for us to understand how children learn. We now know that there's an opportunity for us to move forward in front of the educational system in two aspects: One is child development and brain development itself, and the social aspect, which is daycare, and an opportunity for us to make sure that the children are cared for in every aspect, regardless of economic or socioeconomic standing, to have them prepared to learn when they come to school. That is the first pillar. We've made unprecedented investments in that, and we're getting there. We're getting results.

**1700**

I want to make a reference to my riding. My riding is doing what's called Launch Pad, with Early Years, Kids Can Fly, school boards and other agencies. Quite frankly, we're getting investment from the private sector, because they've identified a need in terms of how we end up having the best shot, the best bang for our buck. They're making investments in that particular program.

The Launch Pad program in Brant is being modelled in several other places in the province. Indeed, they're being asked across the United States to take a look at this



program. So I'm highly complimentary of that particular program. It's a companion to the Best Start philosophy that this government has.

The next pillar: School children can read, write and do mathematics at a higher level by the time they reach 12 years of age. You will see that between Best Start, which is just before school, the primary division between junior kindergarten and grade 3, and up to 12 years old, there's a high expectation that there's going to be success and results based in terms of the commitment from the government to measure those results. So there's going to be an understanding from all the experts that we need to find a way to measure that by the 12th year.

The third pillar is keeping young people learning until the age of 18. As the principal of an elementary school, I know the old-fashioned complaints—I taught; I knew all about this—that we're seeing from the other side, "Well, you can't keep a 15- or 16-year-old in school, so why are you going to make an 18-year-old go to school?" They completely ignored what the answer was. All of us in education and most of the parents knew that you don't keep them in the classroom; you find alternatives, and that's what we're going to accomplish. Those alternatives are even going to be the world of work.

We're going to be identifying ways in which those 18-year-olds can continue to learn. We're going to work with those career colleges. We're going to work with the college system and Minister Bentley's progress on that front. Minister Bentley is over there. We're going to work with the career link organizations. We're going to be working with all of our partners to help students learn at that precious age, not to turn them off but to turn them on to learning, and to show them that they can be equal partners in this system.

The system originally was an agrarian system, so it's not speaking to that any more. We've made that evolution as we've gone through. We want them to have hope and we want them to have a direction. We want to help the parents give them the tools to help them stay. So apprenticeship programs are improving, and all of the areas that we've made those commitments to.

The fourth pillar—Speaker, I've got about 25 more minutes' worth of speaking and I've only got about a minute left. I'm going to defer to my colleague.

The fourth pillar I want to talk about is learning beyond the school and university and college. Here are the other areas that we're making a commitment to: improving the apprenticeship programs, the skills development programs—and that's something I've been harping on in my own riding. I'm a member of the Brant Skills Development Group, which is working with private industry to get those students re-interested in the skills program and get the highest quality from that.

Speaker, I have to tell you, I probably do have another 25 minutes to speak, but I wanted to focus on that area. And guess what, Speaker? The sky is not falling. We're moving forward. I have to make one more comment about that, and that is, people are talking about lost jobs. Boy, you've got to come to Brantford and Brant, because

we just picked up another factory. We've got about five brand new factories in the last little while thanks to the government's beautiful initiative about Places to Grow, the companion to the greenbelt legislation. So I want to tell you, we're looking at, on a shot, approximately 5,000 jobs being created in my riding alone in the next five years.

We're doing the right things. We've moved the Queen Mary. We're now headed down the path and we're going to stay. That course is heading us to prosperity because of knowledge and education and a good health care system.

I defer to the member from Perth—Middlesex. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm pleased to recognize the member for Perth—Middlesex.

**Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth—Middlesex):** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to see you in the chair yet again. Welcome back.

**Mr. Marchese:** He doesn't mean it.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** I want to say to the member from Trinity—Spadina, I think the member for Waterloo—Wellington does a wonderful job in the chair, and I'm sure that you agree with me.

**Mr. Marchese:** I agree with you.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** I'm sure you do.

I am also honoured to join in the debate today about the throne speech. But if you'll indulge me, Mr. Speaker, there is something I would like to share with all the members from all three parties about an event that we are collectively hosting tomorrow here at Queen's Park in regard to The Quilt, which is a project that supports breast cancer survivors.

It started in my riding in Stratford under the leadership of Carol Miller. I am quite happy that Mrs. Munro and Ms. Horwath from the other two caucuses are joining with me in having a reception tomorrow at noon in room 228 and 230. We're very happy to hear now that the Lieutenant Governor will be attending. His wife, Mrs. Bartleman, is, like me, an honorary patron of The Quilt project. We're very happy she's able to join us. The MC will be Paula Todd from TVO. Each member is being asked to donate a piece of fabric, a tie or a scarf, that will be incorporated in an Ontario quilt, the design of which will be revealed tomorrow. Also, all members will be asked to sign a panel so that this Ontario quilt will have the signatures of all 103 of us—well, at the moment 102 of us, because our colleague Mr. Curling is in the Dominican Republic, but perhaps we will have number 103 sooner than we think.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for indulging me. I want to talk specifically about the throne speech. It is an opportunity for all of us to pause after two years of the McGuinty mandate, halfway to the next election. Of course, we all know when that will be: October 4, 2007—my daughter's 19th birthday, I might add. I can never forget that date.

For me, I look at it and I say to my riding, what have we gained within the riding in the last two years? The first thing I would mention is health care. After years and years, I was proud to be able to announce on behalf of the

McGuinity government that the province of Ontario would finally play its rightful role. We contributed, by cheque, some \$7.8 million for a \$16-million redevelopment of Listowel Memorial Hospital. I can assure you that the good people of Listowel had waited a long time.

In my remarks, I praised my predecessor, Mr. Johnson, who was the member for Perth and then Perth–Middlesex for the last eight years. He had been able to secure a commitment of just over \$5 million for the project, but there was no money forthcoming. So it was a proud day for the people of Listowel when that cheque arrived.

Recently, I was going by Minister Smitherman on the opening day of the International Plowing Match, where he had an opportunity to turn the sod for that redevelopment. They'll be getting a new OR, a new ER, new diagnostic imaging, a new power plant, and that will form the basis of a complete internal renovation of that facility. It's quite amazing. On a very small footprint, over the next 20 years that hospital will completely rebuild itself. As Minister Smitherman has said, what doctors are looking for is not bigger; they're looking for better.

That was a pretty happy day. You can imagine how happy I was, then, to go to Stratford, where our hospital, the Stratford General site of the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance, has been waiting some 14 years now, to announce on behalf of Minister Smitherman and Minister Caplan the government's commitment of some \$20 million for the \$40-million redevelopment of the Stratford General site. I campaigned on that, and I must admit, it was a very good day for my hometown, that we're able to move forward. We've said—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Wilkinson:** I'm not glowing like the member for Huron–Bruce is in these last couple of days. She's very happy. But we have good days in Perth–Middlesex as well. I know that for me the fact that there is money going in is important, but it's all about the people we need to care for.

In hospitals every day, people have the best days of their lives. I recall my minister, Laurel Broten, the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, in a hospital having, I would assume, one of the most joyous days of her life, to be able to deliver two bouncing baby boys into this world. We all know that we have at hospitals some of the most terrible days of our lives, and we are surrounded by those caring individuals—doctors, nurses, health care professionals, support staff—who are there for us and for our families, and we must commend them for the good work that they do on our behalf.

**1710**

I am very happy that we have been able to increase funding for a CCAC for Perth county and also for London–Middlesex. I know that we have the opportunity now, finally, given the budget that was presented by the minister, to have “exceptional circumstances” money available for long-term-care facilities. That was not available; it is now. I know the good people of Milverton are working with me and Knollcrest on their redevelop-

ment. I look forward to continuing to urge the minister to grant exceptional circumstances. That community is in the process of raising—it's almost reached their personal target: in a community of about 1,500 people, some \$500,000 worth of donations, which I think is just superb, and the provincial government is looking at well in excess of \$3 million. We continue to work on that, because the throne speech has reminded us that these things are possible because of what we are doing.

I know that my own constituents have told me, “Keep up the good work, John. We need the provincial government to play its rightful role. We need you to stay focused over the next two years. We need you to continue to move forward on the things that are important to people: health care and education.”

As I get an opportunity to go to schools, particularly in grade 5—you know, I enjoy going to grade 5. It's wonderful. I always show up unannounced. I say to the other members, if you ever want to have a great grade 5 visit—because, you know, they study government—the best thing to do is to go to the school and not let them know you're coming. They'll be glad to see you. Go to the principal first. You've got to go to the principal. All members want to go to the principal first and say, “I'm here today. Would you mind if I speak to the grade 5s?” It's always amazing when you go to the teacher who wasn't expecting to have someone of note to visit.

The key thing—I learned this from Mr. Conway, who was a great member. I'm sure the member for Whitby–Ajax would agree with me that Mr. Conway was a great member of this House. I learned from him the importance of allowing children to ask the questions that are important to them, not those scripted questions that the teacher would like them to give but rather the questions that are theirs.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Wilkinson:** Well, we could do that—scripted questions and scripted answers. No, we'll throw that away.

I know that in every publicly funded school there are lead literacy and numeracy teachers. I think that's remarkable. You cannot have that without peace and stability, in my opinion, in the education sector. I know that the good people of Quebec, the good people particularly in British Columbia, wish that their province was enjoying the labour peace that we are enjoying in this province as we move forward.

**Mr. Patten:** BC.

**Mr. Wilkinson:** Yes, in British Columbia it is quite a challenge.

I can say also that our ability to come up with our automotive strategy led to a magnificent day in Woodstock just the other day. What I heard about repeatedly from the people at Woodstock, particularly from Toyota, is the decision of the government to create the automotive strategy and to play its rightful part as we try to build those new jobs.

It's quite interesting, because I remember the mantra of a certain previous government that said, “No, we don't

participate in that. We just cut taxes,” and not a single greenfield site was developed in this province for some 20 years.

Isn't it amazing? I don't think it's coincidental that when we changed the policy of the government and, under the leadership of the Honourable Joe Cordiano, we showed up at the table, our federal cousins did as well. We worked on a win-win-win solution. Particularly, the municipal leaders Mayor Harding and Warden Woolcott in Oxford did a wonderful job. That is all because of the throne speech, our record and what we plan to do for the next two years.

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

**Mr. Jim Flaherty (Whitby–Ajax):** I have a couple of minutes to speak about the throne speech. I listened with interest to the comments of the members opposite and the leader of the third party.

Overall, it's clear that the throne speech was thunderously boring. It was probably the most boring throne speech in the last 10 years or so, certainly the most boring throne speech I've heard over the past 10 years in the province of Ontario. So I applaud the Liberal government: If the idea was to bore the people of Ontario into ignoring the conduct of the Liberal government of Ontario, I think they may well have met with some success. I do hope that when the Lieutenant Governor was offered the job of Lieutenant Governor of the province of Ontario, he was forewarned that this type of extremely boring task of reading this text that lacked imagination or direction would be imposed on him by the Premier and by the members opposite.

If Ontario were in a situation today where we could do without a plan, where things were fine, where there were lots of jobs for people, where our industrial base was growing, where we weren't losing manufacturing jobs, where people felt that their incomes were keeping up with their bills—their insurance bills, their natural gas bills, their heating bills, the gas for their car, their municipal taxes, property taxes—if things were all fine, then boring would be good. But things are not all fine in the province of Ontario, and that's the problem.

The throne speech should have disclosed a plan to deal with electricity issues, to deal with the violent crime issues that we're facing, to deal with the garbage issue and, above all, to reduce the tax burden so that small business and medium-sized business in Ontario will have some incentive to create jobs. That's the crisis in this province. We are facing an economic decline. We are witnessing the economic decline of Ontario under the Liberal government.

**Mr. Marchese:** There is something the member for Whitby–Ajax said that I agree with, and that is that this particular throne speech was Olympically bad and, should they continue in this way, they should be eliminated. I believe that if we continue in this way, we'll have to get rid of these throne speeches.

When the member for Perth–Middlesex talks about staying focused, what he means is a do-nothing kind of throne speech: “Do nothing, stay away from trouble,

don't do anything that might alert the public to the promises we had made prior to 2003, that might remind them of all the promises we broke.” That's what staying focused is: Don't promise anything, and don't do anything.

When the member for Brant talks about these apprenticeship programs and how proud he is, one of the things on which I attacked the minister in post-secondary education, in the briefings at estimates, was in fact the government's desire to give away public money, taxpayer money, to a company called Dell to give 500 call centre jobs to Ottawa. That company is going to get \$5,000 per person coming into that company: Three weeks' training and they're going to get three years of funding—\$5,000 a pop; 500 people. We're talking about Dell here; we're talking call centre. We're talking about individuals making \$8.95 an hour. We're talking of subsidizing a company to get a call centre in Ottawa, and we're going to give them millions of dollars, for what? It's a call centre. Three weeks' training and they're going to get three years' funding. That's what this apprenticeship program is all about. That's the innovation this government is talking about.

This is a do-nothing throne speech, and we've got to get rid of them if we continue this way.

**Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough):** It is indeed an opportunity, when I listen to my colleagues, my friend from Brant and my good friend from Perth–Middlesex, talk about what I thought was a fairly dynamic throne speech, laying out a very comprehensive plan for the province of Ontario in the next two years. I could see the enthusiasm on the face of Lieutenant Governor James K. Bartleman as he delivered those words to this assembly, because that throne speech talked about the future, the kinds of things that have been highlighted by the member for Brant. I had an opportunity to drive through Brant on the 403 a couple of weeks ago. You could see that industrial park booming with new jobs for that community. I had an opportunity to be in my friend's riding of Listowel for the International Plowing Match. You could see things that are growing substantially in Stratford, in the riding of Perth–Middlesex.

Ontario is on the move. We've never had such peace in our schools. Just a short time ago I was in the grade 5 class at Chemong school in my riding. You walk in there and you see teachers with smiles on their faces; you see students who are willing to learn, with class sizes capped. You see parents seeing, for the first time in eight plus five years—that's 13—that there is harmony and peace. There's an education environment that's conducive to positive learning. That's what we've brought to Ontario.

**1720**

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has embarked upon a plan to put \$6.5 billion into community colleges and universities—the first time in 40 years—to overhaul that system, to make sure that Ontario has the foundation, has the basics to advance economically to get that right, to make those investments that all people of Ontario will profit from.

We are going to address the dropout problem with a new program from the Minister of Education.

Taken altogether—

**The Acting Speaker:** Thank you. We have time for one last question or comment.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** It is unfortunate that the mike for the member for Peterborough went dead at that very pivotal moment that he re-described the throne speech as being dynamic, that he reiterated what he said to start his two-minute address. But I can understand it, because I actually heard him say once that he considered the lullaby Rock-a-Bye Baby to be heavy-metal rock.

**Mr. Marchese:** He's easy to please.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** He is very, very easy to please, and his standards are somewhat different than others', certainly different from those of the member for Whitby-Ajax.

This was a vacuous, empty throne speech. There was nothing there but the opportunity for the Premier to bring out some pomp and ceremony, get some photo ops. But it really was the signal that this government, halfway through its four-year mandate, has totally run out of ideas and has run out of gas.

A couple of weeks ago I was at an energy conference over at Sutton Place. Everybody who is interested in energy and the effects we have was there. Perrin Beatty was there, and Duncan Hawthorne, people from OPG, the mining sector and the forestry sector. To a person, they all were so concerned about the effect of this government's energy policy on our economy.

The member from Brant talks about the jobs. The numbers, on the surface, are looking not too bad. But peel off the veneer, my dear friends, and you see where we are going; you see—

**Mr. Marchese:** The underbelly.

**Mr. Yakabuski:** —the underbelly. Thank you, Rosario.

This government is placing the health of this economy in severe jeopardy with its misguided and irresponsible energy policy. The future will not look bright in manufacturing in this province if this government does not wake up and smell the coffee.

**The Acting Speaker:** One of the government members has two minutes to reply. I recognize the member for Brant.

**Mr. Levac:** I thought that only the NDP believed the sky was falling, but now I guess that both opposition parties believe the sky is falling.

I'd like them to speak to the people who are going to get jobs in my riding and tell them that it's superficial. I want them to go and tell somebody working in a call centre that it's superficial. That's a job, and they're putting money on the table and food on the table by it. It's unfortunate that it's being characterized that way.

I want to thank the members from Whitby-Ajax, Trinity-Spadina, Peterborough and Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for participating in this and showing us exactly where they're coming from. But I'd also like to thank the member from Perth-Middlesex for joining me and com-

plimenting us on what we're trying to accomplish in moving this ship around.

I was going to talk about education for a moment. The quick comment I want to make about education is, let's remember that we're coming from eight years of "Some of my best friends are teachers but—bang—let's get those teachers. Some of my best friends are teachers, I'm married to a teacher, but—bang—let's really throw it in chaos." The chaos theory, I call it. "Create a lot of chaos and everybody will believe that there needs to be some kind of reform in the teaching profession."

We are putting peace back into the classroom so they can do their job. That's what it's all about: helping those kids.

Let me quote from the response to the throne speech by the leader of the official opposition. Get this—health care. Be very careful. It's my warning: Be very careful. Listen to this:

"Building a world-class health system, however, requires you to be bold"—uh-oh, cryptic. "There are a lot of entrenched interests in ... health care"—like the patients. "So we all sit and watch money wasted ... Soviet-style central command." There are some other cryptic ones—make no mistake: There are better ways of how we can entrench other people who are vision thinkers who can engage in this debate, vision thinkers, risk-takers, and they're vilified.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate on the throne speech?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville):** I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the debate. I have to indicate at the outset that I concur with the other opposition member, Mr. Rosario Marchese, Trinity-Spadina, and my colleagues as well in describing the throne speech. That seems to be a pretty widespread sentiment, in terms of reaction from the media and others following the throne speech—boring, dull, a big yawn.

There were some commentators the following day who indicated that this was a strategy, that the government wanted to keep things quiet and hopefully slip by the radar of the public with respect to the fact they don't really have a plan in so many areas that are of concern to the taxpayers and residents of this province. We've seen this over the past two-plus years now, where so many of their policy initiatives seem to have been drawn up in the back of a napkin, a quick reaction to something happening in the media. We saw that this week with the Attorney General, who is famous for this, with respect to his justice reform package that he is talking about, which came out of the blue, apparently in response to a Toronto Star series. That seems to be, disturbingly, the way in which this government has acted and clearly is going to continue to act. They are responding to pressure groups, to media groups, to donors from construction unions or from owners and operators of limousines that service Pearson airport.

There was some speculation that the resignation of the then Minister of Finance, Mr. Sorbara, overshadowed the throne speech, but I would say that a heavy rainstorm

would have overshadowed this uninspiring waste of a Lieutenant Governor's time.

I'm just going to take a few minutes. I could go on and on with respect to all sorts of initiatives that could have been mentioned, that should have been mentioned, but for obvious reasons, given the track record of this government, were not touched upon.

A big one that I think is of concern, not just to Ontarians but to Canadians, given what we've seen occurring in this government over the past two years, and of course at the federal level for some period of time, both Liberal governments, is integrity and honesty in government. We raise issues, and there is some criticism with respect to it from the government benches across the way, with holier-than-thou responses to questions by our leader, Mr. Tory, about the appropriateness of Mr. Sorbara staying in office over 18 or 19 months, when the original concerns were expressed.

One has to legitimately wonder about the rationale of leaving Mr. Sorbara in that critical portfolio when the Premier, and he has admitted as much, had no way of being certain whether or not Mr. Sorbara was the subject of a police investigation. We now know that he is, that a search warrant was issued to search the premises of his family company. He was specifically named in the search warrant. What did the Premier do in response to these concerns being expressed 18 or 19 months ago, in fact that the Ontario Securities Commission had launched an investigation? He removed the OSC responsibilities from the Minister of Finance. This after the minister himself had known about this investigation for two months without relaying that information to the Premier. That, to me, would have been grounds for dismissal by any other Premier. If you had a senior minister, especially in a finance portfolio, under investigation by the securities commission and failing to inform the Premier of that investigation for two months until it was becoming public, that alone should have been grounds for dismissal. But I think it's another indicator of the weakness of leadership with the current Liberal government.

**1730**

It seems to be a "hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil" approach, and clearly, when the Premier made the decision to leave this individual in charge of the finances of this province in saying, "I don't know of any police investigation," I think it's pretty clear there was a police investigation underway. There has been one underway for the past 18 or 19 months. That should be of concern to all of us, that this individual, regardless of what the ultimate outcome might be—and we don't want to prejudge that—but the fact that he was allowed to remain in office for 18 or 19 months when it appears clear at this point in time that he was under police investigation, I think, is most disturbing and, again, a clear reflection and indictment of the Premier, his lack of leadership and his inability to make some tough decisions.

I have a few more along that line. Mr. Sorbara is not alone. We had a situation involving the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Takhar, who is now under investi-

gation by the Integrity Commissioner on allegations, which have been supported and admitted to, to some degree, in the media and by the minister himself, with respect to his involvement with business operations, or at least with the head office of the business that he headed up and his wife now heads up. We know that when one is appointed to the executive council, they are required to place their business holdings in a blind trust. They are not to be involved in the day-to-day operations or decisions of that business and those business holdings.

Now we know that the minister was travelling back and forth to that business place—he says, to visit his wife. We know he was there for extended periods of time. We know that he even had political meetings in that office. We know that his chief financial officer was on the board and involved with the company. Yet those are the kinds of allegations, supported by a significant number of facts in the public domain, that the leader of the current government, Mr. McGuinty, when he was sitting on this side of the House, would have been ballistic about in terms of requiring—demanding—that any minister of the former government step aside until the air was cleared. There was no question about it, no grey area, when it came to Mr. McGuinty's demands for resignations by members of the former government.

I happened to be one of them, for a relatively minor incident, where he was certainly on his feet, along with other members of his caucus. We know, time after time after time, the demands for public inquiries and resignations that flowed from these benches. Now we've seen this totally different approach and the holier-than-thou reaction from the Liberal benches when we raise these issues. I would encourage the new members sitting on that side to go back and read some of the Hansards from the past few years when the Conservatives were in power in this province and look at the positions taken by them with respect to ministers of the crown. "Hypocrisy" is not a word that's permitted in debate in this House, Mr. Speaker, so I won't use it.

I have to mention another issue that was raised—several issues, really—related to fundraisers. We're talking about integrity and the failure to mention integrity in the throne speech. We know, on a number of occasions, the ones that are public knowledge, where the construction unions had a significant thank-you fundraiser and raised about a quarter of a million dollars for the Liberal Party. This was right in the middle of legislation in this House by the Minister of Labour, which was removing secret ballot votes for certification of unions in the construction sector. Here's a thank you, a \$250-million thank you, in the middle of legislation—unprecedented, in my history in this place. You could call it tollgating; you could call it a payoff. Whatever you want to call it, it reflects on the integrity of this government, and it reflects badly.

We also know that this is the same group of people who were involved in the working families—

**The Acting Speaker:** I would ask the member for Leeds–Grenville to withdraw his comments about the government.

**Mr. Runciman:** If I said anything unparliamentary, I will withdraw, with my apologies.

**The Acting Speaker:** You did, and I appreciate your withdrawal.

**Mr. Runciman:** This is the same organization that was a significant sponsor of the working families initiative against the former government and invested something in the neighbourhood of \$300,000 to run extremely critical ads of the former government.

We know there was a \$10,000-per-person fundraiser in the home of the former Minister of Finance's brother and allegations surrounding that that related to protection of land around the then-proposed greenbelt. Those are allegations that have never been answered appropriately.

We know that, again, the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Takhar, was bringing in legislation banning Toronto taxis from picking up fares at Pearson airport. We also know that those same limousine drivers, their organizations, raised approximately \$200,000 for the Liberal Party. Again, what does that say about the integrity of the Liberal government? They couldn't speak to that issue because it wouldn't stand the test of credibility, given their track record over the past two-plus years.

If they had wanted to, if they had a clean sheet to present to the public of Ontario, they could perhaps have announced a legislative requirement that political parties keep promises that get them elected. When we talk about integrity, the biggest one that shows continually on public polling is their failure to keep promises that put them in office—230 promises. We've counted 50 so far that have been broken. Of course, the most significant one was their tax promise, where Mr. McGuinty was featured in television advertising promising the people of Ontario that he would not increase their taxes.

Mr. McGuinty and others now argue that, "We had no choice. We had to do this." But they did have a choice. Another element of that promise was that if they felt, for financial or other reasons, that they had to bring in tax increases, they would go to the people; they would make their case before the people through a referendum. That's a key component of that promise which they fail to talk about when they discuss this issue.

Again, they failed to talk in specific terms about the economy. There were a number of references to the economy and economic growth, but I would suggest a great deal of that was bravado, smoke and mirrors. We hear certain pockets of Ontario are doing well, but we all know there's increasing uncertainty about the economic well-being of this province and certainly about the manufacturing base. We have had 42,000 manufacturing jobs lost over the past year. Those are the September statistics: year to year, 42,000 manufacturing jobs lost.

Certainly I know from my own area, my own region of the province, eastern Ontario, we are the recipients of those body blows. In Brockville we've lost SCI, Black and Decker, Phillips Cable. We've seen RCA move out

of Prescott. We've seen manufacturing jobs lost in Cardinal. We've recently seen the Nestlé food plant in Chesterville, which borders my riding, being announced as a closure.

What's happening, Mr. Speaker, as you know, is that many of these jobs are being replaced by significantly lower paid service jobs. We're becoming a service job economy. We may not see the impact of that over the next few years. We're still seeing a large growth in Brockville, for example, of the commercial sector. But I think, over time, that's going to have an impact on all Ontarians and our ability to maintain this healthy economy over the next 10, 15 or 20 years. Certainly in the small business sector we're seeing increased taxes, we've seen increased regulation and energy costs—again, none of these referenced in terms of providing assistance through the throne speech—WSIB premiums—or labour legislation.

#### 1740

The third point that I want to address quickly is agriculture—virtually ignored. Mr. Speaker, I know that you have an agricultural component in your riding. We know how the farming community is suffering. And it's not just farmers; it's the people who live and work in the agricultural community as well.

I had the opportunity, along with a federal member and some municipal officials, on the Thanksgiving weekend, of meeting with Grenville OFA folks and touring, meeting cash croppers, feed and fertilizer dealers, equipment dealers—the whole range of people who are impacted by what is happening in rural Ontario, and who are virtually ignored. Alex McGregor, who is a beef farmer—and I think he's also involved in dairy operations now—his net income from 1997 to 2004, down 85.5%. That's due to higher input costs and lower returns on sales.

Mr. Speaker, we have low commodity prices, as you know, and low crop prices for corn, beans and wheat. There's a whole range of very serious problems, and they are not getting support from the Liberal provincial government. In fact, they witnessed a very significant cut in the ministry budget in the past budget. They are in serious concern, and I would suggest that this Toronto-centric government provide time for urban area members to spend a day or so out in rural Ontario with the farmers, with the cash crop folks, with the implement dealers. Get a better understanding. Get some manure on your shoes. Get out there and walk around and realize the challenges that these people are facing and that you are not addressing in any way, shape or form.

I had a letter from a young couple, Jeff Gatcke and Corinna Smith-Gatcke—it's tough for young couples to get into farming—talking about the fact that they want to grow their business. They want to be in farming. These are young people who grew up on farms and they want to stay in farming. They love farming.

"As grain and oilseed producers, our sector requires long-term solutions to provide stability. Governments at all levels must support the idea of a level playing field, as

Ontario farmers produce farm products at the local level but the prices paid for our products are influenced by world trade issues. Ontario must prove that OMAFRA is a lead ministry and important to their government by increasing the budget, not cutting it, and providing stable programs to help farmers arrange financing and enable young farmers to enter the business of agriculture.”

That’s not happening with this government, and it virtually ignored the sector in the speech from the throne.

Some local issues, quickly: We are seeing some negative impacts in the health care sector. The Brockville General Hospital, which had a \$37-million expansion under the former government, is now being forced by the current Liberal government to close beds. We’re closing a complete ward in the Brockville General Hospital, closing down the lab, restricting operating room time. They are continuing to operate a CAT scan, for which they get no funding from the province, on monies that are donated to the hospital. That’s the sort of thing that’s happening.

We’ve lost the walk-in clinic. This is in Brockville. I understand that the walk-in clinic in Prescott is now under threat. This is overwhelming the Brockville General emergency room. This, all in the wake of a record tax increase by the Liberal government to supposedly improve health care in the province, at the same time removing physio, eye exams and chiropractic care from OHIP coverage. That’s the sort of thing that’s happening.

Nursing homes: I’ve been in contact with Sherwood Park nursing home. Again, nursing homes are under significant pressure. They had promises from this government which are simply not happening. Stress, frustration and discouragement: The government claims “to have created 2,000 new positions in long-term care when in fact, most of us have struggled to retain what we have and are, in fact, planning to cut ... the few health care aide” workers that we have. That’s the reality and speaks to the honesty of the current government. There are so many people, so many challenges, and I can’t get into all of them with the limited time that I have, but I very much appreciate the opportunity.

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

**Mr. Marchese:** I know the member from Leeds–Grenville spent a considerable amount of time focusing on the former Treasurer. My personal view on that is that there’s an investigation and we should let that go through the due process. My view is that we need to defeat governments based on their ideas, and I hope that we will be able to do that in our time here. I will be speaking in about six or seven minutes, and I will outline some of the government’s ideas, or lack of them. That’s what I will do.

**Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans):** It was difficult to sit through the last diatribe by the opposition on integrity. We know that they treated the hydro trough like their own and would not let the auditor near. We’ve opened up all spending to the Auditor General. They hid \$5.6 million of deficit, of debt. The throne speech is

building on the first two years of productive government under the Liberals.

In Ottawa, we have 11,000 more MRI exams, thanks to the good work being done in health. That’s a 50% increase. We still have long wait times. The Baird–Sterling government left us 14th out of 14—the longest wait times in all of the province. That is being repaired every week by this government. Teachers tell us they have more resources. They certainly have the respect from our government. There is peace in our schools and we are getting a lot done. Some \$6.2 billion for post-secondary education, an area that was, I think, 48th out of 50; something like that. We’re just ahead of Mississippi in support for post-secondary education; \$6.2 billion will make a big difference in post-secondary education in Ontario. So under health, education and economic prosperity, this government is moving Ontario forward. We’re on the right track, and the throne speech laid the road for the next two years.

**Mr. Joseph N. Tascona (Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford):** I’m certainly pleased to provide my comments with respect to the speech made by the honourable member from Leeds–Grenville. Certainly, he has set out very clearly that the Liberal government really does not have a plan. If the speech from the throne is a road, it’s a road to nowhere, because quite frankly, they do not have a clear understanding of where they’re trying to take this province.

There are some very serious issues that we’re facing as a province in our economy. At this crucial time, I think it’s proper for the member to raise the issues in terms of finance and having a steady hand in terms of how to deal with this. Quite frankly, the way they’ve been handling the economy has a lot of people concerned. Gas rates, electricity rates and now natural gas rates are all going up, putting pressure on disposable income and certainly putting pressure on keeping this economy going for them.

I just want to make a few comments also in terms of some of the work that I’ve been dealing with in terms of my riding. GO Transit is something that has been very important that I have been working on for many years. Barrie hasn’t had GO Transit for over 15 years. I’m hopeful, having met with the Ministry of Transportation, that we’re going to see GO Transit in the spring of 2006. All we are waiting for right now, apart from the agreement on the financial part of the deal, is that the federal government hasn’t provided an environmental approval at this stage. We’re waiting on the federal government. It may not happen until well into 2006, so for GO Transit we’re waiting on the federal government.

**1750**

I am also pleased to hear today that RVH is going to be getting a stroke recovery clinic. Certainly, that will help my constituents, and we’re very pleased, having worked very hard to get the cancer care announcement and the construction for RVH and Southlake. I’m very proud of that.

**Mr. Levac:** I appreciate the opportunity to engage in the two-minuters.

I want to pick up on something I left off with a while ago, quoting Mr. Tory's comments about the throne speech. Here's his comment: "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." But he didn't acknowledge Bill 8 from the Minister of Health. What he didn't acknowledge was the fact that we passed legislation that is now going to make it transparent and accountable, and the member from Ottawa made that reference to make sure everybody knows we're looking at every single area of government spending to be transparent and auditable by the Auditor General. So I think it's important for us to understand that he's yesterday, and we're talking about today and tomorrow.

Here's the other question he asked: "... why don't we ask the front-line workers for the suggestions they have on how the health care system could be run better?" Where have you been, Mr. Tory? We've done that. When we first were elected, for the first time ever, we asked all the front-line workers from all the ministries, "Where can you help us?" There was something like \$600,000 in savings implemented immediately. So yes, we've been doing that.

Here's one I want to quote that has to ring alarm bells severely: "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." That is a long-winded way of saying we want those guys to come in from the private sector to suck us dry. We have got to be careful of that. Let's stop using the cryptic language and come back and tell us what it is you want to do to our health care system. Don't play with words like that; be up front and tell us exactly what it is you've got planned, Mr. Tory. I challenge you to do that for us so that we can make some choices.

**The Acting Speaker:** I would like to remind all members that they should refer to each other by their riding names, not by their last names.

I will now turn to the member for Leeds–Grenville; he has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Runciman:** I thank the members who participated. The member for Trinity–Spadina said I focused on the former finance minister. I did not. I focused on the leadership or lack of leadership by Mr. McGuinty in terms of his ethical standards when he was in opposition versus now that he's the leader of this province.

The member for Brant talks about transparency. That's a phony point to make. Talk to the chiefs of police here today, I would suggest to the member, with respect to transparency and the development of this criminal case management process that they've now developed without talking to the chiefs of police in Ontario; justice modernization, shutting them out.

The people of Ontario know there were 230 promises made by the Liberal Party when they were running for

office. We have counted at least 50 of them broken up to this point in time. When public polling is done, people, unprompted, describe the Premier with one word, which I will not use because we all know what that word is. That's unprompted. They can try to shake that but it's firmly implanted in the minds of people in this province, who pay attention to what's going on.

They talk about the deficit. That's another phony argument. Half of that fiscal year there were challenges. We know there were challenges. What did they do? They went on a spending spree for the six months of that fiscal year to run up the deficit.

Nursing homes: We know how they're short-changing nursing homes, and I've quoted from one nursing home in my riding. Hiring 8,000 nurses—another promise they made. What have they done? They've fired 1,000 nurses, with something like a \$91-million severance cost associated with that.

We heard them talking about how they condemned P3 hospitals when they were in opposition. What do they do when they get into government? They adopt the P3 policy but they change the name.

They're phony in capital letters.

**The Acting Speaker:** Further debate?

**Mr. Marchese:** It's a pleasure to have this opportunity to speak to the throne speech. We've got five minutes, but we'll pick it up the next day, don't you worry, member for Brant.

I want to welcome people to this political forum. It's been a long, long time that you haven't been able to see us, but here we are back again, live, at five to six. I want to pick up immediately on the throne speech and how Olympically boring and—what else?—bad it was, so bad and so intentionally boring it was that the design of it suggests one thing: They don't want to get into trouble. They don't want to say anything or do anything that could get them into trouble. That's what this budget is all about.

To pick up from what the member from Whitby–Ajax just said so that I don't lose track of it—because the member from Brant stands up and talks with a great deal of vigour and accuses the Tories of having an agenda that benefits the private sector but not the Liberals. God, no, not them. He says it with verve and vigour and passion and alerts the public to the threat of the Tories and the private sector and their desire to privatize out. And when it comes to the Liberals, oh, no, not the Liberals. They wouldn't do that.

I remind you, Speaker, for your pleasure, that the McGuinty government and the Liberals, when they were in opposition, attacked P3s—private-public partnerships—that the Liberals, through McGuinty, said would never happen under a Liberal government. And what did they do? They renamed it. So that they could not be accused of doing what the Tories did, they simply renamed it.

It's now called "alternative financing and procurement," a fancy name for P3s—public-private partnerships. You'll hear denials from all the Liberals across the way and Liberals beside me. You'll hear denials and



protestations to the contrary, and you will have them stand up and either not make any reference to the alternative financing and procurement or, if they do, they'll say, "Oh, no, it's not P3s because, you see, Liberals are not capable of serving the interests of the private sector in order to give them a little extra pecunia, because, you see, those hungry people"—

**Mr. Leal:** Rosario, you were the architect of the 407.

**Mr. Marchese:** Oh, but the Liberals learned nothing from us, it seemed. The Liberals have learned nothing from the—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Marchese:** But if you make reference to it, surely you were good learners. You had the example of the P3s. McGuinty said, "We wouldn't do it," and then you jumped, head, two feet in, with your hands, swimming right into that dirty, dirty private water. You say, "Oh, no, not us; only the Tories—oh, and the NDP. But Lib-

erals are incapable of doing anything that would benefit the private sector—incapable." They are so deep in the doo-doo of private 3s under the so-called alternative financing and procurement that they cannot escape—they cannot, irrespective, notwithstanding, all the protestations from all these fine people across the way and beside me.

I'll come back to this when I have time. Oh, I'm running out of time. You see, time is running out so quickly. All right, Speaker. Thank you. I'll come back to this, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker:** You made a good point, and it's a good time to wind it up. We'll look forward to the remaining part of your speech on the throne speech.

Now this House stands adjourned until 6:45 p.m. later on this evening.

*The House adjourned at 1758.*

*Evening meeting reported in volume B.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
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Ottawa–Vanier	<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine</b> (L) Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Sorbara, Greg (L)
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Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	<b>Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V.</b> (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse		
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)		
Scarborough–Agincourt	<b>Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry</b> (L) Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J.</b> (L) Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader / ministre du Tourisme, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées, leader parlementaire du gouvernement		
St. Paul's	<b>Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael</b> (L) Attorney General / procureur général		
Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)		

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

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

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