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(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 1 November 2006

Mercredi 1^{er} novembre 2006

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

Wednesday 1 November 2006

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 1^{er} novembre 2006

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): The McGuinty government has gotten so used to wasting government money that they have forgotten where it comes from. It comes from hard-working taxpayers like the farmers in my riding, like the people who work hard at the CAMI plant in Ingersoll or at DDM Plastics in Tillsonburg. These people pay their taxes because they want education for their children and quality health care.

No one that I've talked to asked the McGuinty government to spend \$6 million of their money on dropping the "C" from the OLGC. They were happy with the old trillium, and they certainly didn't agree to have \$219,000 of their money spent on redesigning it. They all remember the commercial where McGuinty promised that he wouldn't raise their taxes, but none of them asked the Liberals to spend their hard-earned tax dollars on giving that advertising company fat contracts. They don't understand, and neither do I, why that company, Bensimon Byrne, now gets paid a retainer of \$78,000 a month for a contract with the same description as the contract for which they used to get \$38,000 a month. The McGuinty government seems to think it's all right to use taxpayers' dollars to extend appointments for their friends long beyond the term of government and give them all raises, some as much as 300%.

The McGuinty government has shown a lack of concern for taxpayers by continually breaking their promises. Now it is showing a lack of respect for their hard-earned tax dollars by giving them to their friends.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West): I rise in the House today to applaud McMaster University, Mohawk College, Hamilton Police Service and hundreds of volunteers for making a positive connection with our youth. Bullying is a serious matter with widespread implications and requires everyone's attention and support. Tracy Vaillancourt, an associate professor of psychology at McMaster University, is the creator of Basketball vs. Bullying. She has spearheaded this annual event for the

past four years, with attendance reaching nearly 45,000 students from across Ontario. The message is that young people need to talk to their parents about the serious issue of bullying.

On October 19, the city of Hamilton hosted the world's largest anti-bullying conference. Over 6,000 youth from across Ontario congregated in Copps Coliseum to learn how to prevent bullying. The objective of this conference was to give youth the confidence to raise their voice against bullying and offer strategies for change. The educational sessions were made up of short skits, performances by basketball performer Q-Mack, TV Ontario host Milton Barnes, motivational speaker Johnnie Williams, and an exciting basketball game featuring the McMaster Marauders and the Alberta Golden Bears.

I am proud to report that the Ontario government has introduced an anti-bullying strategy in which they have created a three-year partnership with the kids' helpline, launched a registry for bullying prevention and given additional funding of \$7.83 million to school boards to purchase or expand their bullying prevention program in their schools. We've also made additional resources available for students and parents.

I want to thank Professor Vaillancourt for this initiative, as well as all the people involved in Hamilton for making this annual event such a success. Anything which contributes to giving young people the confidence to communicate with their peers and family, emphasizing the important message that bullying is absolutely not acceptable, is worth our support and commendation.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. Toby Barrett (Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant): Dalton McGuinty has never seen government waste and mismanagement he didn't like. Recall the 2003 election: Dalton McGuinty ran around the province promising anything and everything to get elected. Despite promising not to raise taxes, he brought in the single largest tax increase in the history of Ontario. He originally disguised it as a health premium, but we all knew better.

Dalton McGuinty tried to confuse people about long wait times by spending \$2 million on inaccurate, partisan advertisements. That \$2 million could have been better spent putting doctors in emergency rooms for an extra 11,764 hours on duty. The \$90 million wasted closing CCACs could have been used to start upgrading 13,298 long-term-care beds and to increase the food allowance to seniors to \$7 a day; at present, the allowance is less

than you get in prison. Why did the Liberals divert \$16 million to Dalton McGuinty's "I won't raise your taxes" ad firm? That money could have hired 195 additional registered nurses to work in long-term-care homes. Don't forget McGuinty's infamous health bureaucracies, the LHINs. They've taken \$2 million and bought fancy new furniture.

My message to Dalton McGuinty: We can't afford the waste, and we can't stomach the deception.

EDUCATION GRANTS

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): The Minister of Education has announced yet another new million-dollar grant program, called Parents Reaching Out. This new million-dollar Ministry of Education fund is promoted as being available to school councils and community groups to help support parents who face cultural, linguistic or other barriers in participating in their children's education.

While the idea is good, I wonder whether the government really wants parents to know about this fund. The deadline for this funding approval is November 21, 2006. All projects need to be completed by June 30, 2007. One wonders whether the ministry actually wants parents to get this money, with such a short deadline. As anyone who's worked with schools and community groups realizes, putting together a viable project proposal within three weeks is, at best, a challenging task.

Since we have informed our constituents about this, several constituents have attempted to contact the Ministry of Education about this program. They have gotten caught in a lengthy and time-consuming tangle of voice-mail menu options that don't connect them directly and efficiently to the grant's coordinator. If you are not able to get through on this line, I would urge everyone to contact the Minister of Education, Kathleen Wynne, directly at 416-325-2600. And I would encourage every MPP sitting in this Legislature to send out information to make this new grant program widely known to all their constituents.

1340

ST. LOUIS ADULT LEARNING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION CENTRES

Mr. John Milloy (Kitchener Centre): On Friday, October 20, the St. Louis Adult Learning Centre and Continuing Education Centres celebrated 20 years of service in Waterloo region. St. Louis has become very well known in my community, offering programs that are available for everyone, from infants to seniors.

With a high school diploma program, English-as-a-second-language training and international languages courses, St. Louis continues to thrive. Today it serves as a wonderful example of Catholic education, serving a multi-faith, multicultural community of excellence, innovation and inspiration.

I was pleased to join Kitchener mayor Carl Zehr, Father Fred Scinto, representatives of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board and St. Louis students to help mark this occasion.

The success of St. Louis has been achieved in large part through the work of its staff. I would like to congratulate the principal Paul Cox, Krystyna Freiburger, Luci Santamaria, as well as Tom Forestell and Francesco Robles on this milestone. I would also like to acknowledge Luiza Coelho, Emilia Duarte, Yolanda Garzon, Lidia Goncalves, Karen Hurdal, Pat Kempel, Fatima Mota and Maria Alvarez. These staff members have worked at the school for the past 20 years and have allowed it to progress from serving a small clientele to one that assists over 10,000 students each year.

With the participation of all of the staff, the organization of Lilianna Sosnowski and the children who presented a beautiful quilt to mark the occasion, the event was a testament to the sense of community within St. Louis and throughout Waterloo region. Congratulations on 20 years.

NATIVE LAND DISPUTE

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I rise in the House today to point out that the gross mishandling of the Caledonia file by the McGuinty Liberals has resulted in millions of dollars of unnecessary and reckless government spending. It seems this government just woke up after eight months of the Caledonia occupation to discover they can't handle the file, after spending millions of dollars. So now they are blaming the federal government and asking them to pick up the tab for the spending related to Caledonia that the feds had no say in approving.

Yesterday in the House, the Premier mentioned a long list of items the government has covered in Caledonia, but he didn't attach a price tag to any of them. Today, the Liberals want \$40 million from Ottawa, which includes \$15 million for policing costs, but who knows how much they will want from the feds tomorrow.

I've mentioned in the House before that the Caledonia issue actually stemmed from litigation rather than a land claim. Aboriginal affairs minister David Ramsay agreed, because several months ago he described the occupation as "an accounting claim, by and large." Mr. Ramsay's own website did not initially include the Six Nations or Caledonia property under land claims and related negotiations.

This government has been all over the map with the Caledonia file. One day it was a land claim; the next minute it wasn't. Now the government believes it is a land claim, so they can pin the blame and the file on the federal government in a purely partisan political move. We think Ontarians deserve better than a government that attacks its federal counterparts while trying to pass the buck on Caledonia.

NIPISSING UNIVERSITY

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): Yes, yesterday was a proud day in the district of Nipissing for the city of North Bay and particularly for Nipissing University.

The Globe and Mail yesterday published the University Report Card 2006. In it, it ranked Canadian universities and compared large, medium, small and very small universities. They were ranked on the following areas: quality of education, academic reputation, quality of student services, quality of teaching, variety of courses, class size, libraries, student-faculty interaction, most satisfied students, availability of financial assistance, quality of career preparation, food services, fitness and sports facilities, student residences and diversity of extra-curricular activities.

In those 15 areas, Nipissing University in North Bay ranked first in nine categories in the small university section, including, in my estimation, the most important areas—quality of education, quality of student services, quality of teaching and most satisfied students—beating out such universities as St. Francis Xavier, Trent, University of Lethbridge and Laurentian.

In a feature article on Nipissing University, the Globe noted that despite confusion about its location “that hasn’t stopped Nipissing from consistently besting such legacy-rich institutions as McGill University and University of Toronto in student satisfaction ratings.” We know exactly where Nipissing University is. It’s in North Bay. It’s a proud day for North Bay and Nipissing University. I want to congratulate Dennis Mock, the president, who is mentioned in very high esteem in this article. I congratulate the faculty, the staff and specifically the students of Nip U. I am proud to represent the hottest small school in the country.

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): I rise today to speak about this government and how it is helping to prepare the workforce and upgrade their skills. As this House knows, we have already taken a number of positive steps: We’re on track to increase the number of new apprenticeship registrations to 26,000 annually in 2008; we created a tax credit to encourage apprenticeships; and, in good faith, we signed the labour market partnership agreement with the federal government in November last year.

Unfortunately, we are sitting at the table by ourselves. We need the federal government to come through. They committed to give Ontarians \$1.3 billion, and we have yet to see that flow. Without that money, Ontarians in need will not have the same opportunities as other Canadians to help them get jobs. Those who need help specifically with literacy and essential skills won’t get that help. Some of the most vulnerable groups are aboriginals, older workers, displaced workers and those with

disabilities. They will not be getting the assistance they need and deserve.

Ontarians deserve to be treated fairly. We are asking the federal government to honour that signed agreement. The Prime Minister endorsed it during his campaign last year. This is not about politics. It is about people, and it is about fairness. So I ask that all members in this House call their federal counterparts and help us get what was committed so that we can help those who need it the most and deserve it.

Mr. Ted McMeekin (Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Aldershot): I want to speak about partnership and federal responsibility. It’s bad enough that the federal government has now walked away from the Kelowna and Kyoto accords, literacy programs, our First Nation kids, the environment and our farmers, but now they seem poised to bolt on the fundamental commitment to treat Ontario fairly. Ontario is the economic engine of this great country, but without the support of our federal government it will be increasingly difficult to protect Ontario’s ability to create prosperity. Ontario currently receives less federal funding per capita than other provinces for key services like health care and post-secondary education. That’s simply wrong and begs the obvious question: Why?

It’s time to correct this unfairness for all Canadians, including the 39% who reside in Ontario. Over 200 Ontario business leaders and over 120 municipalities have already passed resolutions calling for fairness for Ontario. What we need from members opposite is assistance in pushing the case for Ontario with their friends at the federal level. Unless and until they show a willingness to join Premier McGuinty in doing so, any talk about standing up for Canada is little more than rhetorical nonsense.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): I’d ask for unanimous consent to wear the MADD ribbon.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Martiniuk has asked for unanimous consent to wear the MADD ribbon in this place. Agreed? Agreed.

VISITORS

Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I have visitors from my area. They are my colleagues in the dental and medical professions, along with their families. They belong to an association called the Northern Indian Medical and Dental Association of Canada. Most of them work in hospitals across the greater Toronto area, reducing wait times working in emergency departments. I appreciate their services to Ontarians. They are Dr. Manohar Joshi; Dr. Sushma Joshi; Dr. Namita Joshi; Dr. Asha Seth; Mr. Arun Seth; my dear wife, Jaswant Kular; Dr. Devinder Sehgal; Mrs. Suki Sehgal; Dr. Bhushan

Sood; Dr. Vijay Bansal; Dr. Kharak Singh Grewal; Dr. Surinder Sidhu; and his wife, Harbinder Sidhu. I welcome them to Queen's Park.

1350

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I want to welcome to the gallery today Miss Eden Orr, who is a grade 9 student at Bais Yaakov high school in Toronto. She is here today and has presented to me a petition to the Ontario Legislature to end discrimination. I would ask all members to welcome her to the gallery today.

Mr. John Wilkinson (Perth–Middlesex): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: It's a very special day for me and for Perth–Middlesex. We have our page Olivia Steven, and both her father and grandfather, Ken and George, are here. As well, I'm joined by my wife, Loretta Shannon, and my sons, Liam and Breen Wilkinson. Welcome.

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm delighted to recognize in the members' west gallery Mr. Reid Bigland, who is the president and CEO of DaimlerChrysler, who has joined with us, Lori Shalhoub and Doug Jure. We had a great discussion on health and wellness in the workplace. We welcome the president of DaimlerChrysler.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I would like to draw members' attention to the members' west gallery and welcome our former colleague Leo Jordan from the fine riding of Lanark–Renfrew, who served here in this place in the 35th and 36th Parliaments.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AMENDMENT ACT (SALARY IN LIEU OF RETIREMENT CREDIT), 2006 LOI DE 2006 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE (TRAITEMENT TENANT LIEU DE DROIT À RETRAITE)

Mr. Runciman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 157, An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act with respect to salaries in lieu of retirement credits / Projet de loi 157, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative en ce qui concerne le traitement tenant lieu de droit à retraite.

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

The member may wish to make a brief statement.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): If passed, this legislation would remove elements of age discrimination against certain members of the Legislative Assembly.

VISITORS

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to welcome my son, Julian Leonetti, and his friend, Brendan Angles, who are here on Take Our Kids to Work Day.

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 Wednesday, November 1, 2006, for the purpose of considering government business. Last night, they were trick-or-treating.

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

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1354 to 1359.

The Speaker: Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion 221. All those in favour will please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Di Cocco, Caroline	Munro, Julia
Arthurs, Wayne	Dombrowsky, Leona	O'Toole, John
Balkissoon, Bas	Duguid, Brad	Oraziotti, David
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	Parsons, Ernie
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoy, Pat	Patten, Richard
Bentley, Christopher	Jeffrey, Linda	Peters, Steve
Bountrogianni, Marie	Klees, Frank	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Kular, Kuldip	Pupatello, Sandra
Brotten, Laurel C.	Kwinter, Monte	Ruprecht, Tony
Brownell, Jim	Leal, Jeff	Tascona, Joseph N.
Bryant, Michael	Marsales, Judy	Tory, John
Cansfield, Donna H.	Martiniuk, Gerry	Van Bommel, Maria
Caplan, David	Matthews, Deborah	Watson, Jim
Chambers, Mary Anne V.	Mauro, Bill	Wilkinson, John
Chudleigh, Ted	McMeekin, Ted	Wilson, Jim
Colle, Mike	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Craitor, Kim	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David
Crozier, Bruce	Millroy, John	
Delaney, Bob	Mossop, Jennifer F.	

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

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Martel, Shelley	Yakabuski, John
Horwath, Andrea	Murdoch, Bill	
Kormos, Peter	Prue, Michael	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 55; the nays are 10.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES COLLÈGES PRIVÉS D'ENSEIGNEMENT PROFESSIONNEL

Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): The McGuinty government believes that the key to Ontario's prosperity lies in our people. The best jobs and the most investment go to the places with the best-educated and most highly skilled workforce.

Nous sommes déterminés à aider les Ontariennes et les Ontariens à atteindre leur potentiel. Nous savons que l'apprentissage est nécessaire à la création d'une main-d'oeuvre forte qui, à son tour, est essentielle à une économie florissante.

Through our Reaching Higher plan, we're investing in our publicly funded colleges and universities so the people of Ontario will see improved access, accountability and quality in our entire post-secondary education system. Today I'm pleased to tell the House that the McGuinty government is also doing more to improve the quality and accountability of private career colleges.

Ontario's more than 500 private career colleges are independent private businesses that prepare about 38,000 students for the job market each year. The schools are located in almost 70 communities across Ontario and offer about 2,800 programs. Our government recognizes that private career colleges fill an important niche in our education system. They provide a wide variety of training to students who appreciate learning practical skills on a flexible schedule from an institution close to where they live. The focused training they offer allows rapid entry or re-entry into the workforce.

The new Private Career Colleges Act was proclaimed September 18, 2006. It will ensure that all students enrolled in private career colleges get the education and training they were promised and expected. The new act replaces 30-year-old legislation that needed to be updated to reflect our concerns for quality, accountability and student protection. The four key aspects to the act are: mandatory registration, improved student protection, quality improvement, and special measures for international students.

Beginning today, new private career colleges that wish to offer training in our province must register themselves as a PCC, and the programs they offer must also be registered. This registration requirement will support improved quality for all students and protect the overwhelming majority of private career colleges that do an excellent job from the actions of a few.

Students will also be protected through the training completion assurance fund, which will provide either further training or refunds if a school closes suddenly. It will be funded by the private career college sector and administered by the government. All registered private

career colleges must be members of the fund. It will build up over the next two years and assume liability starting in January 2009.

The third element of the new legislation requires that training programs offered by private career colleges meet new government-approved standards. We are creating a credentials framework, program standards and performance indicators which will set standard requirements for certificates, diplomas and other credentials.

Finally, to better protect international students, the colleges will be limited to collecting no more than 25% of the cost of a program before students begin. The act also requires certain schools to hold fees paid by international students in a trust account.

There are a variety of other protections. The key part is that the proclamation of the Private Career Colleges Act is only the first step as we continue to work with the sector to implement these regulations and measures. We are determined to ensure high-quality, accountable programs at our private career colleges, and those will help us meet the goal of building the best workforce in North America to support Ontario's competitive edge in today's knowledge economy.

DRINKING AND DRIVING

Hon. Donna H. Cansfield (Minister of Transportation): I would like to acknowledge and thank the member from Cambridge for bringing forward the wearing of the red ribbon.

I rise in the House today to report progress on curbing one of the biggest dangers on Ontario's roads: drunk drivers. The McGuinty government has made progress, along with our safety partners, in preventing drunk driving deaths on Ontario roads.

This morning I was pleased to help Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada launch its annual Project Red Ribbon campaign. MADD Canada is distributing four million red ribbons of the type that I'm wearing right across the country this holiday season. The red ribbon is a sign of respect for the thousands of people who have lost their lives or who have been injured as a result of impaired driving. By tying it on your vehicle, you signify a commitment not to drink and drive, and it serves also as a reminder to others. A red ribbon on your key chain is also a good reminder to yourself.

I would like to acknowledge the great work that MADD does to educate people and to prevent impaired driving. Public education, public awareness and tough penalties are the key to saving lives. Ontario has some of the toughest anti-drinking-and-driving laws in North America. They include stiff fines, licence suspensions, mandatory remedial measures and an ignition interlock program. Drunk driving conviction can cost more than \$20,000 in fines, insurance and legal fees.

In its 2006 report, MADD has given Ontario high marks for our impaired driving laws and enforcement. And I'm proud to report the latest statistics show that the number of fatalities involving a drunk driver has fallen in

Ontario by more than 11% in 2004 compared to the year before, 2003. This shows that our tough laws and public education efforts such as the red ribbon campaign are working. The latest statistics show Ontario has the safest roads in North America for the second year in a row, and we have the lowest rate of alcohol-related road deaths in Canada.

But the simple fact is that drunk driving costs too many lives, too many times. Even one life is one too many. Drinking and driving is still a factor in about one quarter of all fatal collisions in Ontario. That is why we have tough laws to stop people from drinking and driving, and that's why our government is working with MADD Canada and other organizations and groups to educate the public and raise awareness.

I'm looking forward to our continued partnership with MADD and with police services right across this province to counter impaired driving. I ask all members to join me and "Tie one on for safety." We must all urge everyone not to drink and drive this holiday season, and we should not drink and drive all year round.

1410

ENVIRONMENT INDUSTRY

INDUSTRIES DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

Hon. Laurel C. Broten (Minister of the Environment): Today is Environment Industry Day at Queen's Park, and it's a prime opportunity for each of us in this House to get up to speed about this rapidly growing sector in Ontario and to meet with some of the dynamic men and women who are leading its growth.

As Minister of the Environment, I am a steward of the environment for the people of Ontario. My job is to protect our air, our land and our water. I'm also proud to be part of a government that is committed to leaving a cleaner, greener Ontario to our children.

Ontario's environment industry is helping us realize that vision. It is striking to note that close to half of all the environmental businesses in Canada, as many as 2,400 companies, are based right here in Ontario: companies like Waterloo Biofilter Systems, a leading supplier of residential and commercial-scale waste water treatment; and Feel Good Cars, which is developing low-speed, zero-emission electric cars.

Clearly, there is a growing demand for products and services that sustain and protect our environment here at home and around the world. The people and businesses that make up Ontario's environment industry are helping to answer that demand. They are contributing to our province's growth and future prosperity by generating close to \$7 billion a year in revenue and by employing 62,000 highly skilled and well-educated Ontarians. We only have to look at Ontario's environmental leaders—companies like Teknion, Steelcase, Cargill, Rohm and Haas, and institutions like the Trillium Health Centre—to see how environmental performance is inevitably linked to excellence. They prove that going beyond environ-

mental regulatory compliance can boost an organization's results.

Notre gouvernement compte sur l'innovation et les qualités entrepreneuriales du secteur de l'environnement pour aider l'Ontario à réaliser le programme ambitieux de protection de l'environnement. Nous encourageons une culture d'innovation au gouvernement et nous appuyons des solutions créatives de la part des entreprises, des établissements et des particuliers. De plus, nous investissons dans nos gens, la ressource la plus importante de l'Ontario.

Our government counts on the innovation and entrepreneurial skills of our environmental sector to help achieve Ontario's ambitious environmental agenda. We are fostering a culture of innovation within government and supporting creative solutions by businesses, institutions and individuals alike. We are also investing in our people, Ontario's most important resource.

This is Take Our Kids to Work Day. It's a great opportunity to inspire our grade 9 students to reach higher and follow their own dreams for success, because they are our future innovators and entrepreneurs who will bring new environmental solutions to the world.

This government is passionate about supporting Ontario's students, our best and our brightest, and I want to congratulate all of the Ontario Sci-tech Award winners, who brought home a total of 185 awards at this year's Canada Wide Science Fair. Clearly, Ontario is a training ground for the scientists, researchers and leaders of tomorrow. They are the future success of Ontario's environment industry.

Each year, the Ontario Environment Industry Association, ONEIA, partners with us in organizing this day. I would like to recognize Alex Gill, the executive director of the Ontario Environment Industry Association, and Jane Pagel, who chaired this year's Environment Industry Day committee.

Speaker, a strong and vital environment industry in Ontario is helping us build a greener, healthier and more prosperous future for our children and all of our communities. That's the kind of future we all want to see.

WORKPLACE SAFETY FOR STUDENTS

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): I'm very pleased to rise today to take this opportunity to address the Legislature on Take Our Kids to Work Day. Let's all give a very warm Queen's Park welcome to all the children who are visiting Queen's Park today with their family members. I hope they have enjoyed themselves so far, because this is an extremely important day for Ontario students, but more, for all students in Canada.

Today, thousands of young people are seeing first-hand what it means to go to work, and it's up to us as employers, labour organizations, parents, teachers and government to get the message out to students about being safe at work. Let's start these young people off on the right foot by talking to them about health and safety in the workplace.

To ensure the safety of our students and young workers, a comprehensive health and safety orientation should be provided when they first enter the workplace. A comprehensive health and safety orientation should include a tour of the workplace, an overview of potential hazards, emergency procedures, workplace safety rules, first aid provisions, and all other important health and safety facts.

We have to encourage students and young workers to ask questions when they start a new job. We have to make sure that they know there is no such thing as a stupid question when it comes to workplace safety. And we have to make sure that young people understand and know that they have the right to say no to unsafe work.

I want to state emphatically that young worker health and safety is a priority for this government. We are protecting our future by ensuring that our youth work in the healthiest and safest environments. We are actively raising awareness about workplace health and safety among students and young workers. We are making sure that Ministry of Labour inspectors pay special attention to orientation, training and supervision given to new and young workers. I'm proud to say that as a result of our efforts, Ontario now leads the country in improving workplace safety for young people.

Here are just a few of the ministry's initiatives that provide crucial information to our young workers: making health and safety mandatory in the high school curriculum; providing the Live Safe! Work Smart! Program to teachers to impart to their students the knowledge they need to approach work with a safety-first attitude; making information on occupational health and safety and employment standards rights more accessible to young workers and their parents through our WorkSmartOntario website; and revising our employment standards poster to include a reference directing young workers to the new young workers' portal on the ministry website.

I should note that this change was inspired by students who participated in the CBC's Making the Grade project last spring, students just like those who are here today.

In July, I established the minister's action group on vulnerable workers under the age of 25, whose goal is to find new and innovative approaches to reduce workplace injuries and deaths in this hard-to-reach age group. But there is more to be done. This government is on the side of working families, making sure their sons and daughters return home from work safely every day. By working together, though, in a non-partisan way, every one of us needs to make sure that we get the message out to ensure that our youth stay safe at work. It's up to every one of us in this room to create a generation of young workers that places a priority on safety.

I'd like to welcome some young workers from the Ministry of Labour who are here with family members today: Andrew and Bradley Carty and Danielle Serfaty. We are pleased that they're with us. But most importantly, we need to make sure not just on this day but every day that they work safe, and that we do our part to ensure that they have a safe and healthy work environment.

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

PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES

Mr. Jim Wilson (Simcoe–Grey): I'm just responding to the private career college announcement by the minister today. It's not really an announcement. We passed the bill in this House last December. It's the first time I've seen anybody get up here, and just because the regs are coming in—11 months later it takes you to write fairly simple regs to help protect the 38,000 students in our private career colleges, in some 520 colleges across the province, and particularly international students. We all agreed in December that this was a good idea, that people shouldn't be ripped off by some operators who have been unscrupulous, but I want to say that most career colleges do a good job and do fill a niche.

Mind you, you're protecting them while they're at college but you're not doing much for them in terms of making sure they have a job when they leave college: 27,000 job losses in the auto parts sector in September alone this year. That's just one sector and one month. In October, and the numbers are still coming in, there have been over 1,000 jobs lost. Since you and your government came to office, Minister, 113,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost, over the last three years.

Where is the comprehensive plan? In the same month that this bill was passed, December 2005, this House unanimously passed a motion in the name of John Tory for your government to come up with a jobs plan and an economic plan to make sure these young people have jobs when they leave career college. Where is that? So far, the finance minister refuses to do it. The Premier refuses to put together a plan. I was hoping maybe you'd spend your two minutes today in telling us how you're actually going to create some jobs in this province.

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DRINKING AND DRIVING

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I'm also pleased to respond on behalf of the opposition party in respect to the work that needs to be done, and has been done, on Mothers Against Drunk Driving. I commend them for the work they've done. Every time this year that I hear anything on MADD, I think of Constable Terry Ryan, who was killed by a drunk driver a couple of years ago, and I think of his wife, Carol; I think of the Durham chapter of MADD Canada and the great work that MADD Canada has done. So all of us will pay close attention this Saturday, and all through the year, when it's best to take the advice of MADD Canada: Drive safely, drive sober and arrive alive.

ENVIRONMENT INDUSTRY

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): I'm pleased to respond to the Minister of the Environment's statement today. On behalf of John Tory and the PC caucus, I would like to welcome all our guests from the

Ontario Environment Industry Association who have come to the Legislature for the seventh annual Environment Industry Day.

I and other members of our caucus had the opportunity to meet with some very forward-thinking representatives from ONEIA today who are aggressively pursuing avenues to promote environmentally friendly solutions to the challenges we face today. They realize that a healthy environment and a growing economy are entirely compatible. They also realize that this minister and this Premier refuse to move forward and have the courage to make the types of decisions that good leaders make.

We all know this government loves to take credit for things it didn't do, such as Minister Gerretsen's ridiculous suggestion last week that they are the first government to ever seriously take on brownfields. It might be that he was in a state of amnesia or it was simple contempt, but I will take this time to point out that the Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act was passed in 2001—

Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The member alleged contempt against a member of this Legislature. You can't do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I didn't hear it—the way you heard it, anyway.

Ms. Scott: The Brownfields Statute Law Amendment Act was passed in 2001, and shortly after that, direction was given to the ministry experts to start the work on regulations. And—no surprise—the McGuinty Liberals are once again saying anything to get elected even if it means being inaccurate with the facts.

I also wonder if the member from Perth–Middlesex had enough courage to join the Minister of the Environment today and present our good friends from ONEIA with the amazing plan he said that they have. Once again, one broken promise is as good as another in Dalton McGuinty's government.

WORKPLACE SAFETY FOR STUDENTS

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): On behalf of John Tory and the PC caucus, I'm pleased to speak to the Take Our Kids to Work program initiated by the Learning Partnership.

What a great opportunity, to have hundreds of thousands of grade 9 students experience a wide variety of jobs and career opportunities across Canada. Further information for this great program can be obtained at www.takeourkidstowork.ca or www.thelearningpartnership.ca.

I'm sure that this program has the support of all members of our Legislature.

DRINKING AND DRIVING

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): Very briefly, first I want to add my voice to those who congratulate Mothers Against Drunk Driving for their very

effective advocacy in this society to save lives. We all owe them a debt.

ENVIRONMENT INDUSTRY

Mr. Peter Tabuns (Toronto–Danforth): I also want to speak to the statement made by the Minister of the Environment about environmental industries in this province. We know that environmental industries in this province have an important role to play. They are quite important in helping us all reach our goal of sustainable development. But that goal is not supported by this government. It's incredible that Ontario does not have a toxic use reduction act that would make pollution prevention plans mandatory and require companies to reduce their use and emissions of toxic chemicals.

Some other more progressive jurisdictions like Massachusetts are doing this. They set high standards that drive innovation, and we need to keep that bar moving to create the space for Ontario's environmental industries to prosper and to grow and to make Ontario a powerhouse in the global economy, where sustainable solutions and technologies will drive prosperity.

I'm not the only person who is advocating such a course of action. The Industrial Pollution Action Team, an eight-member team convened by former Minister of the Environment Leona Dombrowsky, in its final report to the government recommended implementing regulatory requirements for pollution prevention. In concert with required pollution prevention, this expert panel also called for the government to provide incentives to prompt a shift towards cutting pollution at the source. Low-interest loans and grants for introducing protective pollution prevention approaches are not available in Ontario.

The panel reported on hearing evidence from industry that expressed frustration about existing economic incentive programs which are almost entirely geared to granting exemptions for what is called the bolt-on, end-of-the-pipe pollution control technology, without similar exemptions for more protective pollution prevention approaches.

Currently, in Liberal fashion, a small measure has been proposed in the category of incentives through the environmental leaders program. More cosmetic than substantive in nature, which seems to be pretty common, companies that take initiative to go beyond compliance levels receive recognition on a website and preferred customer status at the approvals branch.

It's readily apparent that there's talent here in Ontario to develop and deliver pollution prevention and actually make a substantial difference. The incentives have to be in place, but lack of action on the part of this government shows that it's continuing to neglect its obligations to Ontario and the environment.

PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): With all the horror stories we've heard with the private career colleges, any news to regulate this industry is not only

welcome but critical. I want to add, with all due respect to the for-profit educational institutions, New Democrats are committed to publicly funded, affordable, accessible colleges.

Further, I say to the Liberals, they should commit themselves to the following: Reduce student debt, freeze and lower tuition fees. We have the largest student-faculty ratio in the country. It's one of the wealthiest provinces. Liberals must provide funding to hire more full-time professors rather than part-time professors at the college and university level. I say hire more teacher librarians—more academic libraries that are well staffed. That's what people are looking for in our colleges and universities. By doing this, more and more of our students will find our public system much more attractive.

WORKPLACE SAFETY FOR STUDENTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): It's Take Our Kids to Work Day, and I'm proud to have my son Julian Leonetti and his friend Brendan Angles here. I agree with the minister that the theme of safety first is extremely important. He will know that Bill 95 was put together by the kids from Oakville, Aurora and Ottawa, who have some really good suggestions about how to improve safety in the workplace.

We know that this is a situation in Ontario where we have 130,000 or more parents who can't bring their kids to work today because they've lost their jobs under the McGuinty Liberals' watch. This is an office environment, so the children who are here are learning about this environment, and yes, there are health and safety challenges even in office environments. In this particular environment, it's usually bumping into somebody's inflated ego or being knocked over by a lot of hot wind. Nonetheless, in all seriousness, I welcome all the young people who are here today and say that health and safety is extremely important. Some of them who are here today in the galleries may be taking these seats in the future.

WOMAN ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I believe we have unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes regarding Woman Abuse Prevention Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has asked for unanimous consent for all parties to speak for up to five minutes regarding Woman Abuse Prevention Month. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Economic Development and Trade, minister responsible for women's issues): Today is the first day of Ontario's annual Woman Abuse Prevention Month. During November, it's our collective responsibility to raise awareness of the prevalence of woman abuse in our society. We must also reinforce the need for all of us to join together to prevent it.

Too many women are living in fear. Twenty-five per cent of Ontario women experience abuse by a partner at some point in their lifetime, and abuse takes a horrible toll. It diminishes self-esteem, it undermines health, it takes away a sense of security, and it limits the ability to be involved in community and society. Woman abuse violates basic human dignity and rights. In a healthy society this can't be tolerated, and in Ontario it won't be tolerated. Our government is proud to join together with all of the women and men of Ontario who are working to put an end to woman abuse.

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Two years ago, I joined the Premier in introducing our government's four-year, \$68-million domestic violence action plan. Over the past two years, we have made real progress in implementing this plan. We have recently sent out our report card to all of our constituency groups who are actively following how we're doing in implementing our plan. We have mobilized individuals and organizations across Ontario to strengthen community-based supports to serve victims. We have launched a campaign to help concerned neighbours, friends and families recognize the signs of abuse and know how to respond. Health professionals, justice and community service providers are being trained to be able to intervene earlier and offer abused women the support they need. And we're working with the justice sector to better protect and support women and their children by holding abusers accountable for violent behaviour.

We have made important progress, but we know there is more work that needs to be done. That's why, later this month, our government will launch an important public education campaign targeted to children and youth and the adults who influence them. Our goal is to set patterns of positive behaviour and attitudes between girls and boys early so that violence is not perpetuated generation after generation. In the coming weeks, we will also be launching a new program designed to help victims of domestic violence achieve greater economic independence through job training.

In recent years, we have learned of numerous tragic cases of violence reported against children and women. Many more incidents occur behind closed doors and are never made public. Woman abuse is a terrible reality, and as a society we all share the responsibility to prevent its occurrence and to work for the protection and safety of women and their children. All of us in this House have a role to play, not just as role models but to influence other adults, who also need to show how their children should be behaving with one another.

Woman Abuse Prevention Month is an opportunity for all Ontarians to get involved and take action to make our homes and communities safer for women and their children. It is an opportunity to recognize that as long as even one woman lives with fear of abuse, our work is not yet done.

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): I'm pleased to participate today on behalf of John Tory and the PC caucus. I join with all members of this House as we mark Woman Abuse Prevention Month in Ontario. Our prov-

ince is full of many fine agencies that assist abused spouses, and we must always give them our full support.

I believe the most important concept in what we mark this month is prevention, and that is what I want to concentrate on in my remarks today. We all know that many abusers were abused as children, that the traumas they suffered as children lead to them becoming abusers as adults. Adult victims of abuse are also more likely to have been abused as children.

In my riding, there is a fine organization called YRAP, the York Region Abuse Program, which helps children, adolescents and adults who were sexually abused as children. I am told that one in three girls and one in four boys have been abused. This means that if you go into any classroom in Ontario, one in three of the girls and one in four of the boys you see in front of you have been abused. This is truly a shocking statistic.

Children also face threats because of child pornography and the Internet. Abuse can now be inspired and significantly expanded by the new technologies that are growing in our society. Violence, sexual exploitation and discrimination in video games, in films and on television can have a strong effect on children, but the main threat to them is abuse—in many cases from people they know and should be able to trust.

We must break the chain of abuse at an early age. To truly protect women from abuse, we need to stop children from growing up to be abusers. Abused girls are also more likely to become victims of assault as adults. Women with a history of sexual abuse as children or teens are three times as likely to experience domestic violence at the hands of a partner or spouse.

YRAP and many other organizations work directly with children who have been abused. They work to heal them as children or when they have grown up to be adolescents or adults. They know that healing is vital. The York Region Abuse Program runs programs in our local schools with both boards and at both the elementary and secondary levels. They know from research that it is peer influence that will have the most effect on the children viewing. They have four separate programs that are divided, to be age appropriate, from kindergarten to secondary school.

One of the results of the program, YRAP finds, is that in school every time is disclosure. This means that students come up to YRAP participants after the program to say that they have been abused. YRAP told me that this happens almost every time they come to teach kids in schools how to avoid abuse. It is a tragic story, yet it indicates the depth of the problem of abuse and the value of programs in showing kids that they can get help.

We must heal abused kids and abused adults, both for themselves and to ensure that they do not become abusers. If we can break this chain of abuse one time, we can break it forever. A child who is never abused is unlikely to ever be an abuser, and a child or adult who has been healed is less likely to be an abuser. Prevention needs to be done at the earliest age possible, and it needs to be done one person at a time.

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): Recent research indicates that violence against women by live-in spouses or partners is a global problem, not just an Ontario problem. New research from the World Health Organization is extremely disturbing. Researchers interviewed nearly 25,000 women at 15 sites in 10 countries. At six sites, more than half of women interviewed said they had been subjected to moderate or severe violence in the home at some point. At 13 sites, a full one quarter said they had suffered such violence in the past year.

No area is immune, but violence in rural areas is particularly acute. Activists in the women's movement have long known of the injury, trauma and abuse of women caused by violence in the home at the hands of spouses, partners and boyfriends. But this latest study puts hard numbers on the horrific reality. It confirms that violence against women is a global epidemic, although it is rarely reported and is often hidden. Depending on the country in this particular study, from one fifth to two thirds of women interviewed said they had never even disclosed their abuse before.

This compelling research cannot be dismissed and should not be ignored. Just weeks ago during the Bill 89 debate, we were riveted, and at the same time repelled, by the testimony of violence perpetrated against the mothers of Jared Osidacz and Kevin Latimer. We were jarred by the fact that those abused women and their children did not have the supports and protection they deserved and desperately needed. When will society finally make the eradication of violence against women a priority?

We see from Alberta what can be done. They have quite a unique program for helping women and children to flee violence that is comprehensive and spares no resource in ensuring that they are finally secure and able to leave. It's not good enough to encourage women to seek help; we need to do more to facilitate a woman leaving a violent home. We need accessible, affordable housing and child care, resettlement funds, and meaningful employment that enables her to support her children upon leaving the home. Women from marginalized, racialized or remote communities, immigrant women, aboriginal women, and women with disabilities and language barriers need to know clearly that they too will not be left behind and that there is a lifeline for them.

Women's groups, led by the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses and the Ontario Federation of Labour, will in fact be rallying tomorrow here at Queen's Park. The Canadian Auto Workers Union and the Ontario Federation of Labour have already begun laying plans for their December 6 memorial to the women who were massacred at École Polytechnique in Montreal. There's a massive mobilization under way already already by these organizations to underscore three key messages to government: (1) Increase, don't decrease, funding; (2) It needs to be core funding, not project funding; and (3) Funding to groups which advocate for women and push for government action to improve the lives of women in this country is essential.

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It is tremendous that the power of women is driving this issue slowly forward, but sad in this day and age that we still must plan events to highlight the tragedy of woman abuse. By now, we should be well on our way to celebrating an end to violence rather than condemning its perpetuation.

Women will tell you there are 10 steps to ending violence against women. They are:

- (1) Understand that violence against women is an equality rights issue.
- (2) Recognize that male power is upheld by rape and sexual harassment.
- (3) Stop racism and oppression and make Ontario accessible.
- (4) End poverty now.
- (5) Create and maintain housing, not-for-profit child care and employment training.
- (6) Provide fair access to justice for women.
- (7) Hold violent men accountable for their actions.
- (8) Stop criminalizing and psychiatrizing women.
- (9) Demand secure funding for women's organizations.
- (10) Listen to survivors and women's advocates. They, in fact, are the experts.

I'd like to add a couple of points of my own:

We have a bill before the Legislature, Bill 45, aimed at ending violence in the workplace. It's been embraced by many groups. The idea is that sexual harassment, any kind of harassment, in the workplace becomes something that can be noted as a health and safety violation, and the employer is responsible to make sure that those violations are addressed like any other workplace hazard.

Another one would be supporting the resolution I just sent to the Clerk, as follows: "That, in the opinion of this House, the government of Ontario should urge the federal government to restore the \$5-million (40%) cut to Status of Women Canada..., which is a vital government agency for women's rights, opportunity and equality."

ORAL QUESTIONS

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL POLICIES

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. Yesterday, the Premier correctly pointed out that this Legislature has passed two resolutions, supported by all political parties, which spoke to the need for a new deal for Ontario. The Premier also pointed out that the Prime Minister said before, during and after the election that he would address these matters of federal-provincial finances, which of course go beyond Ontario alone. I think it's also fair to say that Mr. Harper has said a number of times that some of these things would be dealt with in the 2007 budget next spring.

As the temperature gets turned up and up, it seems that all of us, on behalf of all of the very same taxpayers we all serve, are accomplishing less and less. My question is this: Is the Premier, who has the support, in principle, of all parties on a new deal, willing to consider turning down the temperature, lowering the level of the rhetoric and seeing if we can't try a bit harder to address these issues in a manner that has worked well for Ontario and for Canada in the past, even when different parties formed the two governments? Are you willing to consider that?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I'm more than prepared to adopt any approach, pursue any strategy, that brings about good results for the people of Ontario. But I can say, and I offer this in all sincerity to my friend opposite, that my modest experience in dealing with two federal governments now has led me to understand that there are no real good politics to be had in Ottawa to be seen to be supportive of the Ontario cause anywhere across this country. That's just a political reality.

So what I will continue to do is to press our case before the federal government. We'll be aggressive when it is called for. We are more than prepared to meet on occasion, and we look forward to having our meetings received, but at the end of the day we will do what we think is important and necessary to advance the Ontario case on behalf of the people of Ontario.

Mr. Tory: To the Premier again: I think history would suggest otherwise in terms of the ability of the governments to get along.

As the leader of the NDP said yesterday, this is not about us. It's about people who are out there waiting for affordable housing. It's about First Nations and other residents of Caledonia who are waiting to see progress. It's about people in Toronto who would maybe like to see a world's fair done on a prudent basis. Yet, on the housing, the McGuinty government has \$400 million in an account which is not being spent because governments are squabbling, but the people wait for the housing. People from all corners in Caledonia just wait for some progress, and see a jousting match instead. And the Expo bid expires because nobody can look beyond the short-term squabbles and try to find an acceptable resolution.

My question is this: The Premier was in professional life. I know that in my business life, when I was helping to try to rebuild the CFL and so on, I didn't publicly condemn the people I was trying to do business with and make progress with. It just doesn't work that way anywhere else outside of politics. What does the Premier intend to do to try to get more results since we are not doing well so far?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: We've enjoyed a number of successes, both with this federal government and the former federal government. I will draw my colleague's attention to the Canada-Ontario agreement, which we hope Prime Minister Harper will in fact honour, as he said he would. That will bring substantial support to the people of Ontario, whether you are talking about their

health care, their education, support for retraining opportunities, support for a cleaner and safer environment and the like. So we have in fact scored some successes, but my focus remains on those issues that remain outstanding.

I know the leader of the official opposition does not believe that it is fair for Ontarians to receive \$86 less for their health care and their education than do Canadians elsewhere. I know he does not believe that it's appropriate for us to receive about \$1.2 billion less for our infrastructure than we would were we Canadians in the other provinces. I know he doesn't believe that it's fair for our unemployed to receive \$3,600 less than Canadians unemployed in the other provinces. So we will continue to move forward on all those issues and press our case firmly.

Mr. Tory: I would just like to share some quotes: "I know one thing for absolutely certain is that the finger pointing and the blame game has got us nowhere. I guess it's made a political point in the short term, but it hasn't helped the people of Ontario."

Then, "We've got personality clashes getting in the way of meeting the needs of the people of Ontario."

And then, "We've got a childish, scary contest going on between the provincial and federal governments to see who's going to blink first and hospitals and Ontario patients are getting caught in the crossfire."

Those quotes were words spoken by you, by the Premier of Ontario, Dalton McGuinty, when he was not the Premier, when he was on this side of the House. My question is this: What has changed from the days when the Premier spoke those words to today? I think he was right then and those words apply today. I'm asking, are you going to take a look at whether we can try to make those words a reality and get some results on the very subject you talk about for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I think the leader of the official opposition is concerned about the comfort level of the federal government. That's not my concern. My concern is with the comfort level of the people of Ontario. Whether it's their health care, their education, their environment, their employment opportunities, their retraining opportunities, that is my focus.

From time to time, yes, this is a bit of a rough sport, and I've come to understand that after 16 years, and from time to time, you've got to pick a spot and you've got to pick a side. We've decided to side with the people of Ontario. We've decided it's unfair for them not to get the same amount for their unemployment insurance, not to get the same amount for their health care and not to get the same amount for their infrastructure. So my focus is not to ensure that we have a cordial dialogue with the federal government so much as to ensure that the federal government understands that we have on this side of the House champions for the people of Ontario.

YOUTH CRIME

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. I would say to you, where

you make your mistake is that this is not a sport. This is about achieving results for the people of Ontario on housing and on Caledonia and on transit and on those things, and so far you have been spectacularly unsuccessful in doing that with your present approach.

My question is about the greater Toronto area youth crime statistics that are on the rise. According to a Toronto Star article, "Youths in the 905 regions around Toronto are being arrested by police in record numbers for drug crimes, assaults and weapons offences." Fifteen years of crime data show huge jumps in the percentage involved: from 1991 to 2005, drug crimes in Durham, 7% to 29%; Halton, 10% to 35%; Peel, 4% to 17%. We are hearing that what is needed by police experts and others is a comprehensive approach to keeping kids from getting involved in crime in the first place. We've seen lots of announcements but no comprehensive plan for young people in this province. When are we going to see one?

1450

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): The fact of the matter is, and I think by any objective assessment, we are bringing in a comprehensive approach to dealing not only with crime itself but the very causes of crime. We are proud to be providing additional funding to our school boards so that our schools are available in the afternoons and evenings and on weekends to our young people. We're proud to help fund our youth challenge fund, which has the potential of going to \$45 million. That is a demonstration of our faith in the community. That is not a program that is run by the government of Ontario; it's a demonstration of our faith in the community. Beyond that, we are funding faith-based groups who came to us and said, "Can we not have an opportunity to embrace this cause and to do something for ourselves vis-à-vis our own youth?" So we've also funded that particular program.

I'm delighted to speak at length about the other things, but I can say, in all objectivity, that we are in fact bringing a comprehensive approach to dealing with the demands to address youth crime.

Mr. Tory: I think the government regularly fools itself about schools, for example. Just to pick one example, I was in the Chesterlea neighbourhood in Scarborough this past summer, and the school there was padlocked tight as a drum because the government can't work together with the school boards to actually get those schools open.

It's interesting that the Premier mentions the youth challenge fund. Since last February, this has been announced and reannounced, by our count, seven times. During the eight months of seven announcements, no money flowed; no money has flowed as of today. Now, we've had some applications received, and a small bit of the money is going to go out next month. But given this government's track record when it comes to keeping or not keeping promises, it's a worry as to whether any of that money is actually going to get to the kids and families that need it.

Can the Premier tell us when we're going to see some real progress and what the timelines are for that project you referred to to actually get up and running and really making a big difference for thousands of families instead of a handful?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Let me speak to the issue of this youth challenge fund and the leadership role being taken on by Coach Mike "Pinball" Clemons. That is a wonderful enterprise. It is without precedent in this province and perhaps in this country. One of the things we have found by looking at successful proposals in other parts of the world is that, in many cases, those have been driven from the bottom up. So Coach Clemons has decided to take this on.

It's taking a little bit longer, frankly, than I would have liked, but I think the leader of the official opposition well knows that we have decided not to insinuate ourselves into that process. We've decided not to impose artificial time constraints or dates or deadlines on Coach Clemons's work. We've told him, "Here's the money. Grab the best people that can you with respect to this. Make sure you're getting some solid proposals, and then roll those out the door." That's where we are at this point in time. I think he's doing fabulous work, and I'd encourage all Ontarians to support him in that regard.

Mr. Tory: There is another concern that exists with respect to this program or perhaps how narrowly it's focused, and that is that it is focused—and quite properly, in terms of one of the real challenges that exist—on the 13 so-called challenged neighbourhoods in Toronto, but it doesn't go beyond that. Some of the statistics I outlined earlier on indicate that there's a serious problem with respect to young people getting involved in crime and not being prevented from getting involved in crime in other areas, both in the GTA and beyond. We have London and Hamilton, for example, where we're seeing increasing incidents. Hamilton police chief Brian Mullan asked last spring, "What about those young people living in communities like Hamilton who are also at risk?"

We've put forward a number of recommendations in this regard with respect to things that might be done on a province-wide basis. Obviously, there's a more acute problem in some parts of Toronto, but now that a call for a comprehensive program is in the headlines, this means not just comprehensive in terms of the range of issues it covers but the entire province. When are we going to see some initiative to help the Hamiltons and the Londons with the challenge they face with programs that will help those kids and families to stay out of criminal activity?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I know the leader of the official opposition knows that, overall, the number of homicides and gun-related homicides are down this year; I know he knows that. I think he's also aware of our summer jobs for youth program, which employed 900 young people in the Toronto community this year. I think he also is aware that we are expanding that to, I believe, at least five other communities next year.

Beyond that, we also have a number of other initiatives that we have put in place: a youth and policing in-

itiative, the school-based prevention/diversion program, the youth outreach worker program, the youthconnect.ca website and the Ministry of Government Services Ontario public service learn and work program. These are a host of programs that we have initiated, that we're putting together.

It's great to cite programs, but let me tell you what this is all about. We are absolutely committed to ensuring that young people have every possible opportunity to achieve their potential. We understand that some young people are growing up in disadvantaged circumstances and need a special hand. We're more than willing to lend that hand. That's why we have those programs under way.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is to the Premier. Only a few years ago, you criticized the former Conservative government for running TV ads attacking the federal government. At the time, you called them "wasteful, taxpayer-funded, partisan political advertising," and "political one-upmanship." Today, we learn that the McGuinty government is getting ready to waste public money on your fed-bashing ad campaign, featuring TV and print ads, no doubt prepared by Liberal-friendly ad firms like Bensimon Byrne.

If this kind of ad campaign was, according to you, "wasteful, taxpayer-funded, partisan political advertising" when the former government did it, then isn't it equally wasteful and partisan political advertising for you to do it now?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): Of course, I appreciate the question, but the leader of the NDP hasn't even seen the ads yet and he's already drawn his conclusion about the darned things. He also is aware that there are a couple of safeguards in place that ensure that the public interest is protected.

First of all, the selection process for those who do advertising is something that is independent of government. The second thing the leader of the NDP knows is that we now have a process in place that requires that all proposed ads have to be vetted by our Provincial Auditor.

I know that's something the official opposition did not support, because I guess they thought it would get in the way of their old practices, but we happen to have faith in the system, we happen to have faith in the Provincial Auditor in these matters and we'll continue to do so.

Mr. Hampton: Premier, just a few years ago, you said that the people of Ontario are "united in their disgust at the display of attack ads," "I don't know anybody who supports that," and that this is "flushing ... taxpayer dollars down the advertising toilet." Today there are a lot of working families in this province who are struggling. They need the help of your government. They don't need to see millions of dollars of public money flushed down the TV advertisement toilet by the McGuinty government. I ask you, how can you justify wasting tax-

payers' money on something you yourself condemned as "partisan political advertising"?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: Again, the leader of the NDP is talking about an ad that is not running and doesn't exist. If we did any advertising, it would have to be approved. I know the leader of the NDP understands that.

But here's the real issue: We believe that the federal government should honour the Canada-Ontario agreement, which would provide our unemployed workers with \$314 million more for training; we think that the federal government should be addressing the unfairness that exists at present, whereby Ontarians get \$86 less for their health care and their education; we think that the federal government should be honouring its commitment to address the inequity that relates to infrastructure, which is costing us about \$1.1 billion a year.

Those are the fundamental issues and, yes, we will continue to work to ensure that Ontarians understand how important those issues are to them.

Mr. Hampton: This is what people across Ontario see: the McGuinty government that can't keep its own promises and can't run on its own record in an election campaign, and that engages in the tired, old politics of blame and squabble. Premier, if you want to run that kind of game, then would you at least do it on your own dime? Have the Liberal Party pay for that kind of partisan political advertising.

The reality for people is that all kinds of needs are being unmet out there. They see millions of dollars being wasted on TV advertising attacking the federal government. My question is, why not stop wasting the money, stop wasting millions of dollars on this kind of television advertising and spend it on the services that the people of Ontario need?

1500

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: I'm going to have to say this again: There is no such ad. I'm not sure where the leader of the NDP—if he's seen a particular ad that's attacking the federal government to do with the fiscal imbalance, it's not ours, so I don't know what he's talking about.

If there were to be such an ad, of course that would have to be approved. If there were such an ad, it would only serve to reinforce the case that we've been making on an ongoing basis vis-à-vis the federal government. What we're talking about there is ensuring that we're treated fairly. We're not looking for a special deal from the federal government, we're not looking for extraordinary support; we're simply looking for the same kind of transfer payments that are made to the other provinces when it comes to our health care, our education, our training support and our infrastructure. That's all we're looking for, just a fair deal for Ontarians.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): To the Premier: While your government bickers and squabbles with the federal government, ordinary people across Ontario are struggling—people like the children of

Cat Lake First Nation. Their school burned down this September, destroying the school water purifier. So now the schoolchildren do not have access to safe, clean drinking water. The Minister of the Environment says that everyone in Ontario has a fundamental right to safe, clean drinking water.

My question is this: How can the McGuinty government waste millions more public money on television ads when children at the Cat Lake First Nation school have to do without safe, clean drinking water?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I know the leader of the NDP will be interested in learning that one of the three subjects on the agenda for yesterday's supposed meeting was the quality of drinking water on our reserves. That's something the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs feels very passionately about.

I know the leader of the NDP also understands that the federal government has exclusive jurisdiction over reserves, including the quality of the drinking water. I also know that he's aware that our Minister of the Environment has offered on a number of occasions to provide whatever expertise and support we might lend to our First Nations communities on the reserves and to offer that, again, to the federal government. But we must respect the ultimate jurisdiction and responsibility of the federal government and we're more than prepared to work with them in this regard.

Mr. Hampton: Premier, historically in Ontario, former Ontario governments recognized that the situation in First Nations was so desperate in terms of safe, clean drinking water that they stepped up to the plate and did something. They didn't squabble and bicker with Ottawa, they didn't use First Nations children as partisan ping-pong balls in a battle with the federal government; they did something.

Here's the situation, Premier: This community is so desperate that they're raiding the school breakfast program budget in order to be able to purchase bottles of safe, clean drinking water. My question to you is, when are you going to stop the bickering, the squabbling with the federal government? When are you going to stop wasting public money on your TV ads and do something meaningful like just provide safe, clean drinking water for these First Nations children in Cat Lake First Nation?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: To the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs.

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): The leader of the third party continues to bring up this point in this Legislature, though it should be brought up in the House of Commons, but I welcome the opportunity to address it. As the member knows, there is a prescribed set of roles and responsibilities set out in the Constitution of this country that places the full responsibility of infrastructure, including clean, safe drinking water, to the federal government for our First Nation communities right across this country. That was one of the main items I was going to Ottawa to discuss with the federal minister

of Indian and native affairs there, because we in Ontario believe this is a prime responsibility. We want to see every Ontario resident have access to clean and safe drinking water. We think that's very important, and the federal government must live up to that responsibility. I was to offer more technical support from the province because we have that expertise and we can offer that, through the Ministry of the Environment and other agencies, but we need the federal government to make sure that that's provided to all those communities.

Mr. Hampton: I keep bringing up this issue because former Ontario governments recognized that the need was so urgent, that the health implications were so desperate—these children can't speak for themselves—that other Ontario governments stepped up to the plate to ensure that schools and children had access to safe, clean drinking water.

I think what people saw yesterday was you, the minister, going to Ottawa to engage in another game of McGuinty one-upmanship with the federal government. You're interested in using aboriginal people for the purposes of your own partisan political agenda—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Order. I need to be able to hear the leader of the third party.

Mr. Hampton: What the people at the Cat Lake First Nation school are asking for are 300 four-litre jugs of water so that kids at the school will have access to safe, clean drinking water. My question is this: Will the McGuinty government stop using issues like this for your campaign against the federal government in Ottawa? Will you stop wasting millions of dollars on partisan political ads and step up to the plate and do something meaningful for ordinary—

The Speaker: The question has been asked. Minister.

Hon. Mr. Ramsay: I have quotes here from the grand chief of Mushkegowuk tribal council and Grand Chief Stan Beardy. Time after time they will say, as late as last week, that this is the responsibility of the federal government. They have not come to us to say, "Take this over"; they have come to ask us to be their advocate, which we've agreed to do. That's why we're going to Ottawa. That's why we're pressuring the federal government to make sure they live up to their responsibility. We want to partner with them and make sure we can bring the technical expertise to get these systems right, but the federal government has to bring the money upfront to make sure that happens in these communities.

The tribal chiefs and the grand chief support that, and together we're going to Ottawa to make sure Ottawa does the proper job on behalf of First Nations.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Mr. Frank Klees (Oak Ridges): To the Attorney General: We continue to hear the stories about the backlog in our criminal courts, and now it seems that that same backlog problem is hitting our family courts.

I received a call this morning from a constituent who had spent the last three weeks at the Newmarket court-

house waiting for a family law case to be heard. Two weeks ago, they appeared with their lawyers and they were told that there were no family law court judges to hear cases at all. They were asked to return the following week. Last Wednesday, waiting the entire day, at a cost of \$5,000 for legal representation, at the end of the day they were told to return the following week. Today, this morning, they appeared again with their lawyers. They were told that there was only one Family Court judge to hear 50 cases. After \$6,000 in legal fees, they are still awaiting their access to justice. Minister, is this appropriate, and what will you do to address—

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

Hon. Michael Bryant (Attorney General): First, if there's some way in which I or the government can assist your constituent, I'll certainly undertake to do that and work with you to do that.

I'm assuming you're talking about the Ontario Superior Court and you're talking about Family Court judicial appointments. I'm sure the member is also aware that Superior Court appointments are in the hands of the federal government. So I would appreciate it if the member would join the Chief Justice of the Superior Court and this government in our continued efforts to try and get the federal government to fill the backlog that exists on the Superior Court when it comes to family courts. Will you help me in that regard?

Mr. Klees: Attorney General, Rehana Sumar is in the gallery today. I asked her to be here because I did anticipate that you would agree to help. So I would ask that, following question period, you would in fact agree to meet with her so that you can hear first-hand what the issue is and what the hurtful results of this mismanagement of the court system are.

1510

Will you agree to assume your responsibility as Attorney General rather than laying this responsibility off once again on the federal government? Will you go to bat for Ms. Sumar and all of the other people in this province who are not getting the access to justice that they deserve? Will you pick up the phone? Will you do what has to be done, whether it's with regard to the management of the schedules in these courts or the appointment of judges? Will you agree to do that and will you agree to meet with Ms. Sumar after question period today?

Hon. Mr. Bryant: I'll agree to do what is appropriate in the circumstances. I'm sure the member wouldn't want me to insert myself in a matter that's before the courts. I know the Integrity Commissioner has spoken to this issue and reminded all members in his recent report about the obligations of members under the Members' Integrity Act not to interfere with matters that are before the court, but I've already undertaken to do whatever is appropriate.

In three years, this government has appointed more judges to the Ontario Court of Justice than in any other three-year period in the history of the province. We have appointed in the same amount of time approximately 60

new members to the Ontario court at a time in which the Superior Court—about the same-size court—has appointed just over 40 members to that court. What that means is that there is a significant difference and a very different approach. What we're saying is, we are doing our part within our jurisdiction. We need the federal government to do their part within their jurisdiction, and I know the member—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

MINIMUM WAGE

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park): My question is for the Premier. You say you're standing up for Ontarians, but not the approximately 1.2 million full-time workers in Ontario who are living in poverty because they're earning less than \$10 an hour.

A job should keep you out of poverty, not keep you in it. Ontario's minimum wage is not a fair wage. It is not a living wage. It is not good for our families, for our workers, our businesses or our province's future.

Premier, I'm asking you, will you support my bill tomorrow to increase the minimum wage to \$10 an hour for those thousands of workers, most of whom are women, immigrants or single parents?

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

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): I want to thank the member for the question and say to her that I would hope she takes the opportunity to look back at her own campaign material, which talked about raising the minimum wage to \$8 an hour.

We believe that it's important to have a balanced approach, that we look after the needs of those vulnerable individuals, as well as the impact it could have potentially on businesses. We had not seen an increase in the minimum wage in this province in over nine years. As we moved forward, we made a commitment to phase in the increase of minimum wage over a four-year period. Right now the minimum wage in this province is \$7.75 an hour, with the intent to rise to \$8 an hour by February 2007.

Certainly we support the intent of her legislation; we just don't support the timelines that she puts in place. We believe in moving forward in a fair and balanced approach.

Ms. DiNovo: Minister, at the rate you're raising the minimum wage, it will be another seven years before we see \$10 an hour. I would point you to 1972: The minimum wage was \$2 an hour. According to the Bank of Canada inflation calculator, that would be just under \$10 an hour today. That means our poor are poorer now than they were in 1972 under your watch.

Premier, finally, I ask you again, are you telling working families making minimum wage that they deserve to live in poverty?

Hon. Mr. Peters: For the NDP to stand up and think they have a monopoly on being concerned about vulnerable workers, they're terribly wrong. I'm very proud of the commitment we've made to help support vulner-

able workers in this province. We made a commitment to raise the minimum wage in this province, the minimum wage being at \$7.75 an hour. We have made a commitment to move forward in hiring additional inspectors to protect the health and safety of all workers in this province. We've stepped up our employment standards enforcement in this province to make sure that vulnerable workers have what is owing to them.

Again I remind the honourable member that her party campaigned on an \$8-an-hour minimum wage. We moved forward in a balanced and progressive plan and on February 1, 2007, the minimum wage in this province will rise to \$8 an hour. But I also remind the honourable member that Ontario's minimum wage, behind the three territories, is one of the highest we'll find in Canada.

SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL POUR ÉTUDIANTS

WORKPLACE SAFETY FOR STUDENTS

M. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): Ma question est pour le ministre du Travail. Pendant la journée Invitons nos jeunes au travail, les jeunes ont l'opportunité de passer la journée avec un individu qui fait un travail qui les intéresse. Ils peuvent apprendre la valeur et l'importance du travail ainsi que découvrir quelle sorte de métier les inspire le plus. Le but est aussi de leur montrer l'importance de la sécurité au travail. Un travailleur est six fois plus susceptible de se blesser au travail au cours du premier mois de travail qu'à tout autre moment de sa carrière.

Ces statistiques sont vraies, quel que soit l'âge du travailleur, et elles concernent particulièrement les jeunes travailleurs qui commencent à travailler avec peu ou pas d'expérience ou de formation.

It's for this reason, Minister, that job safety for young workers is of utmost importance. Could you please tell us what you are doing to protect young workers on the job.

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): Merci to the member. I want everyone to know that the health and safety of our young workers is a personal priority for me, because we're making sure, and we're committed to making sure, that our young sons and daughters come home from work each and every day.

We have asked our health and safety inspectors to pay special attention to orientation, training and supervision given to new and young workers. We also understand the importance in delivering a message in incident prevention. That's why we've moved forward with our Live Safe! Work Smart! program and provided resources to secondary school teachers.

As well, we're moving forward on our minister's action group for vulnerable workers under the age of 25. We recognize that those individuals particularly between the age of 19 and 24 are very vulnerable. As well, we revised the Employment Standards Act last spring, which now includes a direct reference to our young workers. This was a change inspired by young workers and the

efforts are paying off. I'm proud to report that Ontario now leads the country in improving workplace safety—

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

M. McNeely: Merci, ministre. Dans ma circonscription d'Ottawa—Orléans, il y a tant de jeunes familles qui sont concernées avec la sécurité des enfants lorsqu'ils entrent le monde du travail.

Workplace safety is a priority for the McGuinty government as young people across Ontario accompany a parent, relative or friend to work today. I know we must all make an effort to teach them about the importance of workplace health and safety. Educating and informing our young people is the best way to ensure that they know how to perform their jobs safely. Perhaps more importantly, we must teach them how to identify work situations that may prove to be unsafe. It is often very difficult for young people to express their concerns to their supervisors. Therefore, we must all do our part to empower them so that they understand, for instance, that they have the right to refuse unsafe work. Minister, how are you getting your message across to young people?

Hon. Mr. Peters: I thank the member for his question and his advocacy. I would encourage every one of us in this House to be advocates for young workers' health and safety because we need to do what we can to get that message out in any way we can.

For instance, today I spoke to 20 children, who took that opportunity to come to work with their parents and their family members, to talk about some of the initiatives we're taking within the Ministry of Labour, but, as well, what they can do to have their first experience in the workplace.

In addition, as I said earlier, we provide a variety of excellent resources to help to get that message out. The Live Safe! Work Smart! program is an excellent resource for teachers. A new, youth-friendly portal on the ministry website leads young workers to easy-to-understand information about how to protect their health and safety and understand their employment rights.

It's important that we get that message out because these young workers are our future. These young workers as well need to understand that they do have the right to say—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question.

1520

DEVELOPMENT IN SIMCOE COUNTY

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Your ministry is leading the intergovernmental action plan to assist in planning development in Simcoe county. As part of this, the Ministry of the Environment paid the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority \$1.5 million to develop the framework that provides advice on development plans and, most importantly, their impact on Lake Simcoe.

Despite the conservation authority's advice, your IGAP process is now recommending a strategy for

development that would allow the level of phosphorus flowing into Lake Simcoe to increase, even though the authority told you that phosphorus levels in the lake are a problem.

Minister, why do you support increasing phosphorus levels in Lake Simcoe?

Hon. John Gerretsen (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I appreciate the question from the member. First of all, the IGAP process, the study that was done, was done on a joint basis between the province and the political leadership in Simcoe county. It basically dealt with the overall planning that's required in the county, as well as environmental studies with respect to watersheds. The report is simply a report to both the government and the county of Simcoe. It was jointly paid for by the two levels of government, and it will be studied by both levels of government.

We understand that in Simcoe county, municipal elections are going on right now, but as soon as the elections are over, the new council will be taking a look at that report and will be developing a local solution to deal with both the planning issues and the environmental issues. We, as a government and a ministry, are more than happy to work with them in that regard.

Mrs. Munro: Minister, increased phosphorus levels in Lake Simcoe would mean continued degradation of the lake and loss of all of the gains made over the last 15 years. My constituents want to preserve the quality of the water in the lake. Will you guarantee residents around Lake Simcoe that you will not allow an increase in permissible levels of phosphorus in Lake Simcoe?

Hon. Mr. Gerretsen: I find it fascinating to get that question from that member. I know she's very concerned about it. That's precisely why the study is being done, to see what the environmental situation is with respect to the two watersheds and what kind of development should be allowed in Simcoe county in the future. The former government did absolutely nothing about it, and we wanted to make sure that the processes that happened both at the provincial level and the county level were going to be done in the correct way. That's why the study was funded jointly by the county and the province and that's why we're both looking at the results of the study as to what kind of planning should take place in the future.

We hope that planning will have a local imprint and a local solution attached to it, but we are more than willing to work, as we have in the past, with the political leadership of that county to make sure that the environment is secure and sound and that development will take place in an orderly fashion.

LAND TITLES ASSURANCE FUND

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): A question to the Minister of Government Services: Yesterday, Judge Randall Echlin said that accessing your land titles assurance fund can "involve years of proceedings and tens of thousands of dollars in legal expense, not to

mention heartbreak and aggravation.” Minister, what are you going to do to rectify this failure, this flaw of your land titles assurance fund?

Hon. Gerry Phillips (Minister of Government Services): The member will know, because he’s been actively involved in the debate, that we, the government—and the Legislature, I might add—are looking pretty comprehensively now at real estate fraud. We have a bill before the House, as you know, that will deal with a part of that, ensuring that no one would lose their title or would have a document registered against the title fraudulently. I think that’s a good move and that will be a big help.

The land title assurance fund is a long-standing fund of the province of Ontario. There are opportunities to improve it; there’s absolutely no question of that. It is our intent to improve the administration of it. It is unacceptable for long delays, and we’re going to fix that. We’re also taking perhaps a little more comprehensive look at the fund itself, at least looking at it being a fund of first resort rather than last resort. So we’re looking comprehensively at it, and we’ll deal with it in the next few weeks.

Mr. Kormos: Minister, Judge Echlin urged the government to take action so that “past, present, and future victims of fraud under the Land Titles Act are provided with the protection and the assurance they expect from a system run by the government” and held out to the public to be a system that they can rely upon.

You are well aware of the litigation that is ongoing by victims of fraud—innocent victims—who are paying tens of thousands of dollars in legal expense, incurring years of heartbreak before they can finally access the fund. Will you ensure that that land titles assurance fund is accessible to the victims who are out there now who have suffered at the hands of fraud artists? Will you make it retroactive?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: Actually, the fund is accessible to them. They are eligible for recourse to the fund right now retroactively, and anybody in the past.

I would just remind ourselves and the public that, first, the legislation, effective the day we introduced it, will deal with many of these problems. You are aware, but the public may not be, that we are in court supporting one of these particular victims. I would also say to them that the fund already provides them with access to funding for their legal costs.

I also want to say that we can do better. This fund can do better, and we will do better. I’ve now met twice with a very large group of experts in the area. I’m planning another meeting in another couple of weeks, because when we do implement our improvements, I want to be absolutely sure they’re workable—

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

EDUCATION

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey (Brampton Centre): My question is for the Minister of Education. But first I wanted to

thank the minister for coming to Mississauga West yesterday to the Oscar Peterson Public School—it’s a new school that just opened its doors to students in 2005—to announce our government’s plan to provide \$1 billion worth of funding for 100 new schools in the province.

Interjection: Bravo.

Mrs. Jeffrey: Thank you.

Minister, I know you’ve been hearing from boards across the province that are struggling with long-term planning and how they’re going to deal with schools that are in a state of disrepair. The new guidelines you released yesterday will give school boards a process they have to follow before considering closing a school. Minister, we know that schools are the heart of Ontario communities, and deciding to close them is rarely an easy decision because it’s such a huge loss to a neighbourhood. What kind of criteria will a school board have to consider before they make a decision about closing a school, and how quickly can these kinds of decisions be made?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): Thank you to the member for Brampton Centre for her advocacy for her community. It was a great visit yesterday at Oscar Peterson school. It’s a beautiful school.

The two things we announced yesterday: First, the \$1 billion that will allow for approximately 100 new schools around the province is a great announcement for school boards. They have been waiting to know about that money and when it was going to come and what the process would be.

The second part of the announcement was the guidelines to which the member refers. What those accommodation review guidelines will do is require boards of education to consult openly with their communities and to evaluate every school as it exists in the context of the community. So in the discussion about which schools to consolidate or close or how to manage the real estate and the facilities of a school, what we’re saying to boards is, you need to look at open evaluation of the school, the value to the students, the value to the community, open consideration of the options and services that could be part of that school, and finally, open consultation—

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

Mrs. Jeffrey: In today’s economy, virtually every job requires some level of skills training. In order to pursue the appropriate training path after secondary school, students need to be given opportunities to explore careers and learn about various occupations. Today, Harold M. Brathwaite Secondary School in Brampton is having a fair with 60 representatives from the community, workplace, post-secondary sectors and grade 12 students. They’ll participate in panel discussions regarding workplaces and apprenticeships.

Minister, we constantly hear that our province is in desperate need of skilled tradespeople. What specifically is your ministry doing to help students develop awareness for occupations in the construction, plumbing and

electrical trades that they may not have considered, so that they will find satisfying career paths that allow them to succeed?

Hon. Ms. Wynne: The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

1530

Hon. Christopher Bentley (Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities): I'd like to thank the member from Brampton Centre for that question. Of course, trades are essential to the prosperity of the province. Whether it's building the buildings or outfitting them inside with electrical wiring or even sprinkler systems, we need the trades for the future.

I'm pleased to announce that one of the programs started by the government of Ontario is the Ontario youth apprenticeship program. It provides a student in high school with the opportunity to get high school credits and, at the same time, begin their apprenticeship. So this year, 20,500 students are going to have the opportunity to participate in OYAP. You get your high school credit; you start your apprenticeship.

It's one of the ways we're trying to engage more and more students and keep them in class longer to get to one of the three destinations of post-secondary success. University, great; college, great; but the trades are an equally important route to success. That's just one of the ways we're making sure we have the trades for the future.

PROPERTY TAXES

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): I have a question to the Premier. Premier, Bill 151, the Budget Measures Act that your minister introduced last week, confirms the worst fears of seniors and other taxpayers about the McGuinty government's insatiable thirst for tax dollars.

Paragraph 6 of section 14 of your bill, as proposed, means that, conveniently after the next election, homeowners will be forced to cope with three years of assessment increases all at once. In other words, in a very sneaky manner, you're proposing a massive three-year property assessment increase, a triple whammy, if you will, on the backs of seniors and working families already hard-pressed to make ends meet in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. Premier, please tell me that the minister made a drafting error, or are you really planning this post-election sneak attack on working families with tax increases?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I know the member opposite doesn't really mean to imply, let alone to state, that somehow there's some kind of nefarious plot here to wreak havoc on seniors. I think what he does know is that we've been working really hard. He understands full well what we inherited—a mess, in short—when it comes to property tax assessment in Ontario. I think there were seven separate pieces of legislation. There were no bare spots left on that tire to patch, it's been so patched.

So we decided to take the time to get it right. In the interim, what we've told seniors and all Ontarians is that

there will, in fact, be a freeze in place while we work to develop a better system.

Mr. Hudak: I guess it's hard to ask for, but I guess I'm asking, Premier, for just a bit of honesty on this issue. You say that there's a tax assessment—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): You might want to rephrase that or withdraw.

Mr. Hudak: I'll rephrase. I expect the Premier to be honest with taxpayers. He's talking about an assessment freeze, but his own bill, tabled in the House yesterday, reveals three years of assessment increases, all coming down on working families and seniors in a single tax year, conveniently after the next election.

Let me tell you about Doug and Tina Palmer from Haliburton. They're retired pensioners on fixed incomes who saw the last assessment of their Dalton McGuinty government skyrocket by 43%, and if they didn't like it, they were told to sell their house. That's one year's increase. Now we find, sneakily after the next provincial election, this Premier proposing a time bomb of a triple increase in assessments. Please, Premier, tell me this is not your intention, that the minister made a drafting error.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm always much appreciative of the enthusiasm and vigour that the member opposite brings to his questions, but it has nothing to do with the substantive aspect that he raises.

I will remind him of the seven separate bills culminating in the disaster of Ontario property tax assessment. There was not one day of committee hearings devoted to those seven separate bills.

If the member opposite is interested in knowing where we're going, he should look at what we've done in other areas as we work hard to improve the quality of the property tax assessment system which we inherited.

First of all, we're enriching the property and sales tax credit in 2006 to ensure seniors continue to receive the full benefit of the credit with the rising federal guaranteed minimum level of income. Furthermore, we offered a 25% increase to the Ontario property tax credit for seniors in 2004 after a 12-year freeze, providing \$505 million to approximately 700,000 Ontario seniors. If seniors want to know where we're going with respect to this, they need only to look at the recent past.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): My question is to the Premier. A confidential report done by Deloitte for the Ministry of Health shows that aggressive cuts have been made to in-patient mental health beds for people with serious mental illness. At London's St. Joseph's hospital, for example, the number of beds for people with an addiction and mental illness was dramatically cut by 55%, from 28 beds down to 12. At the same time, as the report makes clear, there is a serious lack of community-based mental health services, including supportive housing to help these individuals in the community.

Premier, how is it that in-patient mental health beds can be cut when the community services aren't in place to support these individuals?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty (Premier, Minister of Research and Innovation): I'm always grateful for the question. I know that the member opposite will know already that we've invested over 200 million new dollars in community mental health services. Those were the first investments in community mental health in Ontario in over 12 years. What it means for people, though, of course, is that 113,800 more Ontarians are now able to access mental health services in their communities. We think there is obviously more to do, but we're very proud of the progress we have made together working with Ontarians.

Ms. Martel: People must wonder where the money went, because the report is very clear that the community services aren't in place to meet the needs of people suffering from mental illness. In Kingston, the report says, there continues to be a need for additional community mental health services to support high-needs clients. In Ottawa, the Royal Ottawa hospital administration said that transitioning patients out of the hospital to the community has not been successful due to a lack of resources. At St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton, the report notes, "There continues to be a challenge in accessing community resources to support the timing of the discharge of patients."

Premier, I ask you again, when will your government finally put in place the supportive housing and specialized long-term-care and treatment programs to really support individuals with mental illness in the community?

Hon. Mr. McGuinty: You know, the record is always important in these matters. In 1992, the NDP cut mental health funding by \$23 million. But there's more: In 1994, they cut mental health funding by \$42.4 million.

Again, in our first three years we invested over \$200 million more in community mental health services. In terms of some local numbers: in London alone, \$17.3 million more to the Erie St. Clair and South West local health integration networks; \$5.4 million more for mental health in Middlesex; \$6.2 million more with the increase in Leeds-Grenville, Frontenac and Lennox and Addington counties.

So, yes, there is more work to be done, but the fact of the matter is that we continue to make progress on the ground, where it counts.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West): My question is for the Minister of Energy. I have a conservation forum in Hamilton to encourage a better understanding of and give my constituents the tools they need to conserve energy. My constituents benefit, like everyone in Ontario, from the cleaner air and lower costs that come from reduced energy use and they're prepared to do their part to reduce their energy consumption. This forum was very well attended and enjoyed the wonderful support of Horizon Utilities and Mr. Peter Ormond, as well as all the community. It's important that the government play a

leadership role in energy efficiency. Although I understand that we need to bring new generation online because the previous government made no investment in new generation, I also understand that it's easier to save a megawatt than to build one.

I also understand the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance recently released its annual report card, and that Ontario has received a grade of B+ from the alliance. Minister, what steps has Ontario taken to earn such a wonderful grade?

Hon. Dwight Duncan (Minister of Energy): I don't know if members heard the question. This morning, the Canadian Energy—I wish the member from Kenora–Rainy River wouldn't leave. He should hear this. Today we received, on energy conservation, energy efficiency, a grade of B+, up from D under the previous government. The member for Kenora–Rainy River, who didn't want to stay and listen to that, said this government has done nothing—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): You cannot refer to a member's presence or absence in this place.

1540

Hon. Mr. Duncan: The member from Kenora–Rainy River has tried to say, and has said in this House in the past, that we had no plan. The Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance says that not only do we have the plan, we have a Premier who's engaged in the plan, and that this government is leading Canada and North America on energy conservation. It has not been easy, because the NDP closed down all conservation programs in Ontario in 1995. They don't understand the environment. That's why they're losing votes to the Green Party, but this government—

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary.

Ms. Marsales: It's encouraging to hear that this government is committed to conservation and has the plans to back that commitment. It's imperative that we promote conservation; not only that, but that, as a government, we show leadership ourselves and reduce consumption in government buildings. The opposition has called our conservation spending a misplaced priority and has tried to attack the positive steps we're taking, frequently citing California as a beacon of energy efficiency.

Minister, can you set the record straight? What is the government doing to conserve energy in its own backyard, and where does Ontario stand in terms of energy efficiency vis-à-vis California?

Hon. Mr. Duncan: That is again something that's been addressed in this report card. Ontario's right up there with California. With our Energy Efficiency Act, we have the highest standards, along with California, on 95% of the products that are carried under that.

Unfortunately, polygraphs aren't covered under that act yet. Maybe we're going to want to add those next year. The truth is, the changes we made this year to our Building Code Act have saved the equivalent of the electricity use of 380,000 homes.

This is a government that understands conservation, understands the environment, has moved on the environ-

ment, is cleaning up energy—and, by the way, prices are coming down. Everything that should be coming down in energy is coming down, and the things that should be going up are going up, unlike the previous two governments in this province.

CORMORANT POPULATION

Mr. Robert W. Runciman (Leeds–Grenville): I have a question for the Minister of Natural Resources that deals with a bill recently tabled by your colleague the member for Prince Edward–Hastings, which would amend the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act. As you know, in the Thousand Islands and in the member's own area, cormorants are creating significant challenges in terms of the commercial and sports fishery. They're eating 42 million pounds of fish per year. This is a serious problem. They're toxic—their droppings are toxic. They're killing islands. They're resulting in the closure of public beaches.

Minister, will you stand in this House today and indicate to all of us, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and others who are very much concerned with this situation, that you will support your own colleague's initiative?

Hon. David Ramsay (Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for aboriginal affairs): I applaud my colleague's initiative. He works very hard for not only his constituency but his region. As the member has just said, this particular bird has caused severe terrestrial damage on many of the islands and Lake Ontario and has obviously threatened the commercial and sports fishery in our Great lakes and other inland lakes as they're moving in now. I understand very much his motives bringing in this forward. I wish him well with the bill and very much support what he's doing.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd like to correct my own record. The US minimum wage is \$5.15 an hour.

PETITIONS

PHARMACISTS

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): Thank you very much for the opportunity to present a petition on an issue that's very important to my constituents in Durham, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the McGuinty government passed the Transparent Drug System for Patients Act; and

"Whereas as a result of the regulations of the bill, generic drug companies are required to supply drugs at the cost prescribed by the government; and

"Whereas generic companies have not agreed to these terms; and

"Whereas pharmacists are required to purchase the drugs at prices set by the generic companies; and

"Whereas the government's new formulary does not fully reimburse pharmacists for the cost of drugs; and

"Whereas the government has removed the 'cost to operator' provision; and

"Whereas pharmacists are forced to either lose money or bill patients for the actual cost of the drugs; and

"Whereas the viability of small, independent pharmacists is being threatened through the government's actions;

"Now therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government immediately return the 'cost to operator' provision, thereby guaranteeing affordable access to medication for all patients" in the province of Ontario.

I'm pleased to sign and support this and I present it to Dominic, one of the outgoing pages here.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): I have a petition signed by residents of Niagara Falls and St. Catharines and delivered to me by the SEIU. It reads as follows:

"Whereas, in June 2003, Dalton McGuinty said that Ontario Liberals are committed to ensuring that nursing home residents receive more personal care each day and will reinstate minimum standards, and inspectors will be required to audit the staff-to-resident ratios; and

"Whereas Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman, in October 2004, said that the Ontario government will not set a specified number of care hours nursing home residents are to receive each day; and

"Whereas Ontario nursing home residents still receive the lowest number of care hours in the Western world; and

"Whereas studies have indicated nursing home residents should receive at least 4.1 hours of nursing care per day; and

"Whereas a coroner's jury in April 2005 recommended that the Ontario government establish a minimum number of care hours that nursing home residents must receive each day;

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

"That the government of Ontario immediately enact a minimum standard of 3.5 hours of nursing care for each nursing home resident per day."

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

FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): Again today I have a petition.

“In Support of Skilled Immigrants—Bill 124

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government is committed to establishing measures that will break down barriers for Ontario newcomers; and

“Whereas these measures will ensure that the 34 regulatory professions in Ontario have admissions and application practices that are fair, clear and open; and

“Whereas these measures will include the establishment of a fairness commissioner and an access centre for internationally trained individuals; and

“Whereas, through providing a fair and equitable system, newcomers will be able to apply their global experience, which will not only be beneficial to their long-term career goals but also to the Ontario economy as a whole;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

“That all members of the House support the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, Bill 124, and work to ensure its prompt passage in the Ontario Legislature.”

I agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it.

WATER QUALITY

Ms. Lisa MacLeod (Nepean–Carleton): I’m delivering this petition today on behalf of the people of rural Ontario and eastern Ontario.

“Whereas every Ontarian wants the best water quality possible; and

“Whereas the goal of clean water can be achieved effectively through amendments to existing legislation; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals are determined to hammer through the flawed legislation known as the Clean Water Act; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have failed to put in place adequate, stable, long-term funding into the bill; and

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals have failed to effectively address the numerous problems in the bill; and

“Whereas rural Ontario stands to suffer significantly under this poorly-thought-out policy;

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

“To not pass Bill 43 (the Clean Water Act) until proper funding and amendments are in place.”

I affix my signature to this petition, which is a bit dated, but I do hope it has made its point.

FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Mr. Shafiq Qadri (Etobicoke North): I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“In Support of Skilled Immigrants—Bill 124

“Whereas the McGuinty government is committed to establishing measures that will break down barriers for Ontario newcomers; and

“Whereas these measures will ensure that the 34 regulatory professions in Ontario have admissions and application practices that are fair, clear and open; and

“Whereas these measures will include the establishment of a fairness commissioner and an access centre for internationally trained individuals; and

“Whereas, through providing a fair and equitable system, newcomers will be able to apply their global experience, which will not only be beneficial to their long-term career goals but also to the Ontario economy as a whole;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

“That all members of the House support the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, Bill 124, and work to ensure its prompt passage in the Ontario Legislature.”

I wholeheartedly support this, affix my signature and send it to you via page Adam.

1550

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a petition from Hydro One customers in the Oakley township, Draper township and Vankoughnet area east of Bracebridge. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Hydro One Networks Inc. provides hydro to many communities in the region of Parry Sound–Muskoka; and

“Whereas there have recently been several lengthy power outages in this region affecting both private residences, schools and businesses; and

“Whereas rural customers pay among the highest distribution and delivery charges for electricity;

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

“That the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Energy Board require Hydro One Networks Inc. to make improvements in line maintenance and forestry management in the region of Parry Sound–Muskoka to ensure reliable energy for its customers.”

I support this petition and have affixed my signature to it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): The member from Timmins–James Bay.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): Thank you, Speaker. It’s about time you recognized me.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas, in June 2003, Dalton McGuinty said Ontario Liberals are committed to ensuring that nursing

home residents receive more personal care each day and will reinstate minimum standards, and inspectors will be required to audit the staff-to-resident ratios; and

“Whereas Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman, in October 2004, said that the Ontario government will not set a specified number of care hours nursing home residents are to receive each day; and

“Whereas Ontario nursing home residents still receive the lowest number of care hours in the Western world; and

“Whereas studies have indicated nursing home residents should receive at least 4.1 hours of nursing care per day; and

“Whereas a coroner’s jury in April 2005 recommended the Ontario government establish a minimum number of care hours nursing home residents must receive each day;

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

“That the government of Ontario immediately enact a minimum standard of 3.5 hours of nursing care for each nursing home resident per day.”

I’ve signed that and give it to Breanna from Kapuskasing to deliver to the table.

FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex): I have a petition in support of skilled immigrants—Bill 124.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government is committed to establishing measures that will break down barriers for Ontario newcomers; and

“Whereas these measures will ensure that the 34 regulatory professions in Ontario have admissions and application practices that are fair, clear and open; and

“Whereas these measures will include the establishment of a fairness commissioner and an access centre for internationally trained individuals; and

“Whereas, through providing a fair and equitable system, newcomers will be able to apply their global experience, which will not only be beneficial to their long-term career goals but also to the Ontario economy as a whole;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

“That all members of the House support the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, Bill 124, and work to ensure its prompt passage in the Ontario Legislature.”

I support this petition and affix my signature as well.

HEALTH PREMIUMS

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario.

“Whereas, according to the Department of National Defence, there are over 30,000 serving military personnel calling Ontario home; and

“Whereas, according to the most recent census data, there are more than 1.6 million senior citizens over the age of 65 living in Ontario; and

“Whereas the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario plans on eliminating this illegitimate tax for all Ontarians after it forms government in 2007; and

“Whereas, as an interim measure, the illegitimate health tax should be removed from those who protect Canada and those who have built Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, call on the government of Ontario to immediately eliminate the illegitimate health tax, beginning with serving military personnel and senior citizens.”

I’ve signed this, and Chad from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound will take this to the table.

FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Mr. Kuldip Kular (Bramalea–Gore–Malton–Springdale): This petition reads:

“In Support of Skilled Immigrants—Bill 124

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government is committed to establishing measures that will break down barriers for Ontario newcomers; and

“Whereas these measures will ensure that the 34 regulatory professions in Ontario have admissions and application practices that are fair, clear and open; and

“Whereas these measures will include the establishment of a fairness commissioner and an access centre for internationally trained individuals; and

“Whereas, through providing a fair and equitable system, newcomers will be able to apply their global experience, which will not only be beneficial to their long-term career goals but also to the Ontario economy as a whole;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

“That all members of the House support the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, Bill 124, and work to ensure its prompt passage in the Ontario Legislature.”

I agree with the petitioners and I have put my signature on it as well.

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government is committed to providing the best possible health care system to the people of Ontario;

“Whereas the McGuinty government is committed to improving the quality of life for the people of Ontario;

“Whereas the McGuinty government has moved to expand medical leave to include more members of the immediate family so the people of Ontario can take care of ailing relatives while not having to worry about the loss of their job;

“Whereas the McGuinty government has invested approximately \$611 million in new medical procedures to reduce wait times, with Ontario consistently showing the shortest wait times;

“Whereas hospital funding has been increased by \$2.4 billion;

“We, the undersigned, applaud the McGuinty government for protecting and enhancing Ontario’s health care system and the health needs of Ontario’s citizens.”

I agree with this petition. I affix my signature to it and give it to page Stephen, who is here with me today.

HIGHWAY 35

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): “Highway 35 Four-Laning

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas modern highways are economic lifelines to communities across Ontario and crucial to the growth of Ontario’s economy; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation has been planning the expansion of Highway 35, and that expansion has been put on hold by the McGuinty government; and

“Whereas Highway 35 provides an important economic link in the overall transportation system—carrying commuter, commercial and high tourist volumes to and from the Kawartha Lakes area and Haliburton; and

“Whereas the final round of public consultation has just been rescheduled;

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

“That the Liberal government move swiftly to complete the four-laning of Highway 35 after the completion of the final public consultation.”

This was brought to me by members of the Kawartha Lakes Chamber of Commerce, and I affix my signature to that.

FAIR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I have another petition today:

“In Support of Skilled Immigrants—Bill 124

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government is committed to establishing measures that will break down barriers for Ontario newcomers; and

“Whereas these measures will ensure that the 34 regulatory professions in Ontario have admission and application practices that are fair, clear and open; and

“Whereas these measures will include the establishment of a fairness commissioner and an access centre for internationally trained individuals; and

“Whereas, through providing a fair and equitable system, newcomers will be able to apply their global experience, which will not only be beneficial to their long-term career goals but also to the Ontario economy as a whole;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

“That all members of the House support the Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006, Bill 124, and work to ensure its prompt passage in the Ontario Legislature.”

These are from people from all over Ontario. I agree with this petition and I will affix my signature to it.

HEALTH PREMIUMS

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): “To the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas according to the Department of National Defence, there are over 30,000 serving military personnel calling Ontario home; and

“Whereas according to the most recent census data, there are more than 1.6 million senior citizens over the age of 65 living in Ontario; and

“Whereas the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario plans on eliminating this illegitimate tax for all Ontarians after it forms government in 2007; and

“Whereas, as an interim measure, the illegitimate health tax should be removed from those who protect Canada and those who have built Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, call on the government of Ontario to immediately eliminate the illegitimate health tax, beginning with serving military personnel and senior citizens.”

I’m agreeing with this and I’m glad to put my name to it. Patrick is our page. He’s serving his last day in the House today, I think, and he’s here to receive my petition. Is this your last day? He’s not sure. I think he’s here next week too. I may have made a mistake there.

1600

OPPOSITION DAY

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): I move that in the opinion of this House, the government should spend every single taxpayer dollar wisely and with respect for the taxpayers;

That, in the opinion of this House, some examples of reckless government spending include: \$6 million to remove the C from OLG; \$219,000 to redesign the Ontario Trillium logo; \$20 million to quietly give raises to appointees to government agencies and boards; \$2 million for an inaccurate, partisan advertisement about health care; \$91 million to fire nurses; \$90 million to close or consolidate community care access centres; \$16 million for Dalton McGuinty’s “I won’t raise your taxes”

Liberal ad agency; \$2 million for LHIN office furniture and design; and \$55 million—at least—on Caledonia.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Mr. Tory has moved opposition day motion number 2. The leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Tory: I think this is a very important debate and an important topic for us to be debating, because at the end of the day what it is most about is respect. It is about respect for the people who sent us here. They are not just the people who sent us here but the very same people who work hard out in the constituencies across the province, in communities across the province, to earn the money that the provincial government then taxes to provide, supposedly, for much-needed public services. I think people have worked hard to earn that money, and they have the right to expect that we're going to take care in how we deal with that money; that we are actually going to set priorities in dealing with that money; that we're going to manage their money responsibly. It is about respect. It is about priority setting. There are so many needs out there and there are so many people in need that it is incomprehensible that we could show the kind of disdain and disrespect for the taxpayers' money that we've seen from the McGuinty government, and I'm going to talk a little bit about that today.

As I said, it's not only about respect, it's not only about priority setting, but it's also about management and responsibility. This government under Mr. McGuinty seems to have raised the disclaimers and the absolution of themselves and the pointing of the finger of blame at somebody else to a new art form. It just isn't acceptable—if you really believe in accountability, if you really believe you have the responsibility for management and for accountability and responsibility—to simply blame somebody else.

What I'd like to do in the time available to me today is to point to three areas where I'd like to compare and contrast what the McGuinty government did and what they could have done, and the situation they left unattended by their wasteful and reckless spending in three specific areas.

Let me start with the McGuinty approach on example number one, which is the example of Bensimon Byrne, the Liberal advertising agency we've heard so much about, and in particular the trillium logo. Bensimon Byrne, in general, so far have received \$16.1 million in business from the McGuinty government. So that people at home will know, this was the very same agency that did all of their advertising, supposedly as volunteers, at the time of the last election, including the famous ads that had Mr. McGuinty saying, "I will not raise your taxes." They did that as supposed volunteers, and now we find that three years later they've received \$16.1 million in government advertising. That includes a monthly retainer, which before the Liberals got elected was \$38,000. Now it has been increased to \$78,500 a month as part of the \$16 million. Some volunteer assignment.

Mr. McGuinty, the Premier, says, "They just win all these competitions fair and square. We have a process

and it works," and it just seems they win all these competitions. Well, I would say to you, the Montreal Canadiens in their heyday, when they won the Stanley Cup every year, would have blushed at this kind of winning record. I know that will make the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound very happy. Tiger Woods would be envious at a winning record like this that Bensimon Byrne has established for themselves: \$16.1 million in government advertising contracts.

So we have that, and then we have inside of that \$219,000 for the trillium logo, which they were appointed. I'm sure they won that competition to redesign fair and square, too. This is, of course, where they took the trillium logo, which had served Ontario well for, I think, about 30 years, and redesigned it to look like the Liberal Party logo. It's going to cost untold millions to change all the signs and the letterhead and so on.

Let me just review with you what the Woodstock Sentinel Review had to say about that. They said, "Change for the sake of change. There was nothing wrong with the old trillium logo and the Grits have created a financial disaster by introducing a revamped version. Surely the monies directed towards the new design could have been better spent elsewhere."

What did the Windsor Star have to say about it? "Leaving aside the fact that a quarter million tax dollars seems an outrageous price for something that you arguably could have sketched out on a cocktail napkin, leaving aside the fact that the existing logo has served this province with distinction for decades and leaving aside the aesthetics of the revamped design which resembled the trillium in the Liberal logo and has been panned by designers and even disgruntled Grits, the optics of this questionable deal would make even a blind man avert his eyes in disgust."

That's not to mention the taxpayers who averted their eyes or had to mop their eyes with a Kleenex in disgust about their hard-earned taxpayers' money going to this boondoggle that these people thought was an appropriate use of taxpayers' money.

Now, let's contrast that with the need that exists out there on the part of autistic children. Let me just share with you an extract from an e-mail sent to me by Joyce and Michael Grant, who are in—I can't tell you where they are. I think they're in Mr. Tascona's riding, Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford. They talk about their son, Timothy, who was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in January 2005 at age 3: "We've been on the Kinark waiting list since then. We are currently number 13 on the list. With quite a few families also in need ahead of us, it is clear that no one in our region has benefited from any funding in the last year. It is extremely disheartening."

Or we could take the family of Josephine Hutton, who writes to me to say, "For the last 15 years, we've been living in constant survival mode" in respect of their son, "which has taken a big toll on all aspects of our life. The greatest effects have been noticed on my own health. I've developed numerous chronic illnesses caused by constant

stress and trauma. Last, but not least, the constant fighting with government to receive any kind of support. Recently, we've had an urgent referral to a psychiatrist at CPRI. It took six months to get any kind of reply. I finally got a letter telling me that in approximately 18 months I'll be getting an appointment date," and she goes on from there.

Last, but certainly not least, Lisa Prasuhn from Beeton, Ontario: "In April 2004," her daughter Carlyne "was diagnosed with autism and took her place along with the 753 children on an interminable wait list for treatment. It can be difficult to accept," she says, "that our child cannot write with a pencil, eat with a spoon, dress herself, ride a bicycle on her own, ride a school bus with her sister, recognize the dangers of traffic or be able to speak and call me 'Mom.' But even harder to accept is the fact that our provincial government promised me, but is failing to provide, the treatment and services that would help our daughter overcome some of these aspects of her disability."

What does it say about this government that they have this money, \$16 million in contracts for their Liberal ad agency, \$219,000 to redo the trillium logo to the same Liberal ad agency and they have no money to help those people who are writing to us about autism? What does it say about respect for those taxpayers? What does it say about respect for their money? What does it say about priority setting? What does it say about management and responsibility?

I think it says everything about the fact that these people in this government, the McGuinty government, don't care about those things at all.

Example number 2, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.: They managed to find \$190,000 to do focus groups to look at taking the C out of their logo because they thought that would make a big difference. I don't know who it would make a big difference to, aside from guess who? The very same ad agency that did that work and won that, I'm sure, fair and square and now is going to cause, as a result of that work, the lottery corporation to spend \$3.185 million on lottery signage in all the different stores and \$2.662 million for signage in casinos and at tracks.

This is what Duncan Brown, the chief executive officer, a man I've had dealings with over the years and a person who I thought otherwise seemed to know what he was doing—let me just read you what he had to say on September 6 in front of committee: "The rebranding initiative was around a need to fill an information gap, a risk to our gaming operation's integrity and reputation, the need to make our messaging more meaningful, an opportunity to bind the thousands of employees together behind a common cause—and, frankly, an opportunity to get much more effective marketing expenditures."

1610

We've now seen, after those words were spoken, a report that came out saying that we seem to maybe have some problems with the security of the system. This other stuff is poppycock; it's just poppycock. They're not

going to sell a ticket; they're not going to make an extra dollar of profit that's going to go to help the environment or hospitals or anything else as a result of this change. The only people who made any money on this are those who are doing this research and advertising and making signs and so on and so forth.

Again, I'll quote from the Toronto Star. Nobody should take it from me. Take it from the Toronto Star. Here's what they had to say: "Consequently, the \$4 million to \$6 million the agency has just spent to drop the C from its name and rebrand itself as the OLG is a colossal waste of money that could have been put to better use in a hospital or a few schools which the lottery supports by feeding the government's coffers. Why should the government-run quasi-monopoly need to brand itself at all when it has no real brand name competition? And how does dropping a C from its name and slightly changing its logo create an impression of trust and integrity, as chief executive Duncan Brown claims? Did it just reflect a certain careless attitude of easy come, easy go by the people who run the agency or was it, as one opposition MPP suggests, a way to pay off a Liberal-friendly ad agency? It's hard to see any credible rationale for throwing away millions on something like this." So said the Toronto Star.

Compare and contrast: In the Peel emergency room, which I visited not too long ago, for people that day the average wait time was 12 hours to be seen by a doctor. Mr. Katz, from Thornhill, Ontario, who wrote me an e-mail, said, "Several weeks ago I had to take my wife to North York General emergency late one evening for an emergency situation related to her being a cancer patient receiving chemotherapy. We had to wait about nine hours, to the early morning, to have a doctor see her and provide a diagnosis. This wait time was agonizing for my wife, who was ill at the time." He then goes on to say, as members might recall, that he himself found out a couple of days later that he had to see an ophthalmologist and was told his appointment would be in August 2007.

Compare and contrast: millions to spend on signs that will do nothing, according to the Toronto Star and just about everybody else; no money to speak of to really invest in solving a crisis that exists in the emergency room or the doctor shortage for millions of people in Ontario. Does it demonstrate respect for the taxpayers' money? Absolutely not. Does it show any sense of priority-setting at all? Absolutely not. Does it show any sense of management, responsibility and accountability? Absolutely not.

The final example is this: They somehow manage to find—these people who sit around at these important meetings in the cabinet room—\$20 million. Mr. McGuinty and his team found \$20 million to give raises to the principally Liberal appointees on boards and agencies. By the way, at the very same time they extended the maximum term those people can serve to 10 years, so they can try to rule from the grave and have their appointments sitting on, long after they're gone on October 4, 2007. That includes the Ontario Film Review Board

chair, who got a 300% increase, the Conservation Review Board chair, who got a 353% increase, and on it goes.

Compare and contrast: No money, but severe cutbacks for the farmers of Ontario. As of today, after two budgets, the two most recent budgets, they're \$400 million short of where they were in the previous year—\$400 million short for the grain and oilseeds farmers, \$400 million not available to people who are struggling, and struggling mightily, to try and keep up.

September 20, 2006, just a couple of weeks ago, a farmer, Mr. Doug Eadie, president of the Corn Producers' Association, was quoted in the Canadian Press: "It's a tragedy, really; it's becoming rampant...."

"Financial institutions and farm suppliers are reconciling their businesses to deal with a much-downsized group of producers, and we'll pay for it, as a province and a country, in the end."

They go on to say, "There has to be something long-term. That's the bottom line...."

He says here, "We feel caught in between, and right now we've hit an income crisis, the third year in a row of record-low prices."

Again I pose the question: What does that say about respect for the taxpayers' money? They have all this money to spend on giving these appointments to agencies and boards, extended terms and much bigger pay packets, hundreds of percentage points in increase. What does it say about priority setting that they let the farmers of Ontario twist in the wind while they give these appointees a big raise? What does it say about management and responsibility?

To conclude, I'll simply say this: This must change, and this will change, because we will make that change when we form a new Progressive Conservative government for the province of Ontario. We will show respect for the taxpayers' money because that is what we were sent here to do: to treat that money with the trust it was sent with by the taxpayers when they earned it. We will set priorities, and we will not place the interests of Liberal-friendly ad agencies ahead of those of autistic children; we will not put the interests of logo redesigns ahead of emergency rooms; we will not put raises for government appointees ahead of the farmers of Ontario. We will actually manage, take responsibility and have some accountability for how the taxpayers' money is applied.

We move this resolution because—in conclusion, I will say—the taxpayers of Ontario simply can't afford another McGuinty government, and we're going to make sure they don't have one.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. Further debate?

Ms. Jennifer F. Mossop (Stoney Creek): It's a pleasure to rise to speak to this motion. Just last week in this Legislature, our Minister of Finance, Greg Sorbara, stood up to present his fall economic statement. He began by saying, "Cast your mind back to 2003." Quite frankly, the only thing I could say was, "Do I have to?" It's just a

little too painful to cast my mind back to 2003, when the Progressive Conservative government was in power, after eight years of being in power in this province. It was painful to remember the state this province was in at that time, and it was painful to remember the kinds of conversations I had to have with constituents at the door: elderly people who were worried about not being able to stay in their home because home care was in such disarray; children and parents who were wondering whether or not they were going to be left out in the cold from their schools once again because of a strike or some sort of disruption in the school system caused by a government that was hell-bent on bringing teachers to heel; people who were tired of not being able to find a family doctor or not being able to get into the hospitals at all for any of the procedures they needed so desperately.

There were so many issues. Quite frankly, the atmosphere was that they could no longer rely on their government or the government services to be there for them. They couldn't even turn on their tap and feel comfortable and confident that what was coming out of that tap wasn't going to hurt them. That was the state that our province, our great province of Ontario, was in, in 2003. So it was painful to have to cast my mind back to that time.

The other part about it was that we had a situation where we had been told that we had no financial issues: Everything was clear sailing. The budget had been presented by the previous government in an outside auto plant and with great show, saying, "Isn't this wonderful? There's no problem." Then, lo and behold, after those tough eight years, the people of Ontario said, "Do you know what? I think we've had enough of you guys. We're going to give these other guys a chance." And the Liberal government, the McGuinty government, was voted in.

One of the first things we did was open the books. We opened the books and—surprise, lo and behold—it is not a balanced budget. There is a \$5.5-billion deficit. We looked in all sorts of other areas. We opened up the books at Ontario Power Generation and looked at the horrific spending habits of some of the executives there. Maybe it's a small thing, but the opposition leader wants us to be accountable for every dollar. Well, how does he account for the former Premier being wined and dined at Canoe for \$700 for lunch by a former aide of his, and then they slid the bill under the OPG? So what did we do?

Oh, and just before I go on: The other thing I think a lot of people had trouble with was that there was a panic by the previous government to cover the fact that they had a deficit, or to try to avoid the deficit that was ballooning out of control, so they sold a highway. They sold the 407 to a Spanish consortium. They gave away the rights to the revenue from that thing for 99 years. Now, when people are trying to drive that highway, they have to pay tolls on that highway, and none of that money is going to benefit taxpayers. The taxpayers of this province paid to have that built. They are not benefiting from that highway in any way, but they are

paying tolls on that highway. That was sort of their last-ditch effort to try to get out of the mess that they had created.

1620

So one of the first things we did as a government was say that we were going to introduce legislation that would allow the Provincial Auditor to open up the books, not just of this government but of the agencies outside this government: school boards, hospitals, OPG, Hydro One. Let's have him look at those books and tell us what kind of state they're in, not after the next election but before the next election, so that the people of this province can see exactly what kind of state the finances are in. That's accountability.

Then you say, "The way it works in politics is that you never really know when the election is going to be, because the party in power just calls it when it suits them, when the polls are looking good." So we now have, for the first time in this country, a fixed election date so we all know when it's going to be. It's going to be in October 2007.

Now the Provincial Auditor knows exactly when those books have to be opened and examined, and when he has to make the report to the public. He knows when the election is, and so the public of this province, the taxpayers of this province, will have the opportunity to see the books and know exactly how this government and its agencies have spent the taxpayers' money, and they can judge for themselves before they go to the polls next time. There won't be any pulling the wool over anybody's eyes.

I want to talk a little bit about what this government has done to rebuild the province, to rebuild the reliable resources and public services we all used to be able to rely on. One of the areas, of course, is health care. There was a tremendous amount of work to be done in health care.

Just recently—you may have heard it in the news just last week—the Fraser Institute, which I believe is aligned with the former Premier as well, came out to say that Ontario, in fact, has the lowest wait times in this country. I would go as far as to say that the Premier of this province has in fact made wait times a national issue. He has put wait times on the national agenda, and we're leading the pack in getting wait times down through a number of key investments we've made.

We've tackled the issue of family doctors by creating family health teams across this province. Family health teams can actually help a doctor see up to 50% more patients, because they use the resources of nurse practitioners, nutritionists and other professionals within the family health team. So the doctor can make the diagnosis and then refer the patient to the appropriate medical professional in the family health team, thereby freeing himself or herself to see the next patient.

We are moving hundreds more foreign-trained professionals and doctors into the system than has ever happened before. We're moving them in much more quickly.

We've increased medical school spaces by 23%, and that means we are growing more doctors in Ontario. To encourage more medical students to stay in Ontario, we have increased our portion of the funding for their tuition so that we're more competitive with other provinces, so we can grow those doctors here in Ontario.

We have created satellite medical campuses in communities where doctors are needed—St. Catharines, Kitchener-Waterloo. The idea is that when students spend so long in medical school, they actually do take root in those communities. So if we're attracting medical students to this province, they are very likely to take root here and stay here.

In our schools, we have not had one single day lost to strikes or labour unrest in the three years we have been in power. We have a tremendous relationship with our partners in the education field, and we have rebuilt the education system. We are restoring specialist teachers, building new schools and engaging parents in the conversation, and there's tremendous peace and stability that has not been there for a very long time.

In the area of the environment, we've done the clean water legislation, moving further on the Walkerton recommendations; we've put forward that there must be 5% ethanol in our gasoline; and we're building ethanol plants. Maybe 5% doesn't seem like much, but that can reduce harmful emissions from our cars by 30%. Ethanol is also a good thing for farmers, because we use corn to make ethanol. So we get a win-win: We get better air and we are supporting our farmers at the same time.

We are uploading where the previous government downloaded. We've uploaded land ambulance costs; we've uploaded public health costs; we have provided municipalities with much-needed funding to repair their roads.

I could go on and on, but I have other speakers who wish to speak to this bill. I have to tell you that we have done a tremendous amount that is responsible. We take the work that we're doing here extremely seriously. I have never met, in my entire life, a harder-working man than the Premier of this province. He is a visionary. Every time a decision is made, we have to climb up in the crow's nest and look out 20, 30, 40, 50 and 100 years and say, "What do we need to be there and how do we get there by making the decisions we do now?", incrementally making structural and very deliberate decisions around how to grow this province on a reliable path not just now but well into the future for future generations, because the province is not ours; we are building it for our future generations.

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): In the few minutes I have here, I'd like to talk about the waste that this Liberal government has forced upon the Ontario people in the last three years. I know some of it was mentioned, but if you think of it—the stuff that really bothers me is the \$6 million they took to remove the "C." All they could put into their bill was \$7 million on the water bill that they put in. Then they come into this House and say, "If you didn't vote for the bill, you

were against clean water.” How naive is the Liberal Party? Well, I don’t think there’s—you can’t explain it, they’re so bad. All they could come up with was \$7 million—that’s not going to do anybody any good. It cost \$6 million, though, just to take the “C.”

The money they spent to change the trillium logo: That’s offensive, if you want me to tell you. I live in the country, where we do have trilliums that grow, where that flower actually is, and for them to come up with a symbol that looks like three men in a tub, because that’s all they could come up with, and spend all the money on the waste that they’ve done—people in rural Ontario are aghast with this government and the things they are doing.

They don’t care about our seniors. I’d like to read a letter that I got from some seniors in my area about the lack of investment in seniors:

“The recently proposed Long-Term Care Homes Act promises comfort and dignity for all long-term-care residents, but for over 35,000 of them who live in older homes, the promise is empty.

“They will continue to live in three- or four-bed wards and to line up in wheelchairs in crowded dining rooms, uncertain even about the future of their homes in their communities.

“They are the forgotten” by this Liberal government. “The Meaford LTCC, where my mother lives, has been forgotten. Government has no vision or plan for them.” This is coming to me from constituents in my riding.

“Instead of a commitment to secure their future and their home, this legislation makes no commitment to fund the structural renewal of older homes.... Please ask government to remove the cloud of uncertainty they have placed over these residents, their families and communities by ... committing to fund the renewal of older homes now. They deserve a plan now, not 10 years from now.

“Just three years ago, in the election, you”—the Liberals—“promised \$6,000 in additional care for every resident and an additional 20 minutes of care.”

This is just one of the many, many letters that I have received over the days from people in my riding who are concerned about people living in older homes and the seniors in our community. Yet they can go on and waste millions of dollars—just millions of dollars. You think about the \$55 million—and it’s climbing every day in Caledon—and nothing’s being done about it. This government goes and buys the land; they own it now, and they still pay the heat and the hydro to those homes that were there. They just don’t have any idea about what it is to finance this province. They can just go out there and say, “Oh, well, we have money here, we have money there,” but when it comes to seniors and rural Ontario, they totally forget about us.

This government has let the people in rural and northern Ontario down drastically. They just keep on spending and spending money that we don’t have. They just have no idea what the world is all about. It’s unfortunate that we are saddled in Ontario with a government like this.

1630

That’s why today I wanted, in my few minutes, to speak on this opposition motion. I know the Liberals will all come in here and they’ll be whipped in here to vote against it. There’s no doubt. That’s one of those other broken promises where Mr. McGuinty said, “You know, people, we’re going to listen to everybody. We’re going to listen to the backbenchers in our own party and in other parties as well.” That was one of the worst promises he made, because he has never listened to any of us. They’ll whip them in here. They’ll have to come in and vote even though they know in their own hearts the money they are wasting. Just think, there are four members who come to this assembly from London. Their voices aren’t even heard anymore. This government has allowed Toronto to take—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh (Halton): A new dump there.

Mr. Murdoch: A new dump there. Isn’t this awful? We haven’t heard one word from the members in London, which is unfortunate. And then they waste money on all these items. Why couldn’t they have used some of this money to help those members out and to help fight something like that? But I guess it’s unfortunate that London is going to have to take all the garbage from all over Ontario. Those are things that this government lets happen.

The main thing is the waste that they’ve caused and the money they’ve spent on all these items that are listed here. It’s a shameful day today that this would happen in Ontario, that this government would do these things.

Ms. Monique M. Smith (Nipissing): I’m delighted to have the opportunity to speak against this motion today. I find it amusing that the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound said that our government was leaving the north behind. I represent the proud riding of Nipissing, and certainly in Nipissing we do not feel that this government has left us behind.

It’s actually quite amazing that the previous government could put forward this motion about accountability when they, in fact, left this province with a larger debt than we’ve ever seen and left us with a \$5.6-billion deficit to dig ourselves out of, not to mention the structural deficit that was left behind with the roads and bridges across the north—

Interjection.

Ms. Smith: —including in your riding of Timmins–James Bay—that were left unattended to for years. For years we saw the Tory government presenting plastic cheques, rubber cheques that bounced all over the province; plastic cheques for big infrastructure investments in our province that never took place, that never moved forward.

Let me talk to you a little bit about my riding and the rubber cheques we saw in our riding. We saw promises of moving forward with our hospital—big pictures, big hoopla, the Premier, shovels. They’ve had shovels in the ground, but there was no movement for five years. Our hospital was supposed to be done in 2005. Well, it’s 2006 and, thanks to the McGuinty government, we’re going to

see movement on that hospital and shovels in the ground in March, if not sooner. It's the first time we've seen that kind of movement.

We have a hospital in Mattawa that for 27 years languished in portables. It's a deplorable situation for our health care workers. And now, because of the McGuinty government, we're moving forward with that project, where for some reason the previous government—and I will tell you that the Premier was from my riding—was unable to deliver on these promises they made to our communities, to our residents.

We've seen movement on Highway 11, which is a long-promised issue in my riding, something we're very proud to be saying that we will have completed by 2012.

These are the kinds of investments that our residents want to see and that they've long waited for but the previous government, for whatever reason, was unable to make. That is my question: Where was the accountability of that previous government? Where was their responsible spending? We saw big rubber cheques, we saw lots of advertising, we saw lots of glitz and glamour, but we saw very little substantial investment in our communities, particularly in the north. We saw very little investment in our schools. In my riding alone, in one board in my riding—and I have four boards—we are seeing 19 schools being repaired as we speak. We are seeing improvements in the quality of life of all of those students.

I had the privilege of having the Minister of Education in my riding this week, and we visited four schools—two brand new schools and two schools that definitely need some help. We saw some really great educational tools in all of those schools because our government is investing in our future, in our children.

I want to say hello to my niece Kate, who's watching today, I hope. She's one of the reasons that I got involved in politics and that I enjoy every day my job of improving the life of our children in the province. She's three and a half. She's going to junior kindergarten. We're seeing her class size maintained at 20 students or fewer, and we're working towards achieving that goal across the province. That is a strategic investment by this government to improve the quality of life for our students across the province. I don't think people really appreciate the value that that is going to have over the long term as our students in those younger years get the appropriate attention that they need.

Speaking of attention that they need, in my riding as well we've seen investment in a children's treatment centre, something that's been promised in North Bay for over 20 years. The previous government talked a good line; I spoke to pediatricians in my riding who had heard that it was coming for years from the previous government. Again, where is the accountability? Where are they to answer for the promises they made and never invested in? Today we are seeing the children's treatment centre developing and growing in my riding. They're in a temporary spot right now, but they're moving forward with their permanent site. They have great plans, and they are serving the children in my community as they

should be served, like every other child across the province.

The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound spoke of long-term care. As you know, this is an issue very near and dear to my heart, and I'd just like to address some of the issues that he raised. While it's not part of this motion in particular, it does reflect a certain sense of the accountability that the previous government failed to have with respect to our seniors. While they did build some new homes and beds across the province, they put them in the wrong places. We have certain areas in the province today that have a lot of over-bedding, where we have empty beds going for want. In other areas across the province, we have incredibly long waiting lists.

We have a different type of home across the province, which the member alluded to, and that is because the previous government did not have a plan for the re-development of all of our homes. We've introduced legislation that will allow us, in phases, to look at different kinds of homes that we have across the province and ensure that every resident in our long-term-care homes has the appropriate level of care and is treated with dignity and respect. That is the basis of our legislation. That is what we're moving forward with.

Our government is incredibly committed to the well-being of all Ontarians—our seniors in our long-term-care homes, our seniors who want to age in place—and for that reason we've invested tremendous amounts of money into home care so we can have our seniors age in place across the province.

For all of our citizens looking for training and apprenticeship, we've seen some great investments in that area, particularly in my region through Canadore College and Nipissing University that I spoke so proudly of today, rating so very highly in the Globe and Mail university survey. But we're also looking out for our children through our smaller class sizes and our literacy and numeracy programs.

Our government has also introduced some really important initiatives that will ensure accountability of where the money is spent in the province. Unlike the previous government, we can now conduct full-scope value-for-money audits of school boards, universities and colleges, hospitals and all crown-controlled corporations. As well, the auditor has the final sign-off on the province's books before a general election, so that future governments will not be stuck with the type of deficit situation we were stuck with and that we've spent the last three years digging ourselves out of.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak against this motion. I am firmly committed to our record. I'm very proud of what the McGuinty government has achieved to this point. We continue to grow and improve the quality of life for all Ontarians.

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): It's a pleasure to stand on this opposition day and put on the record what is actually happening. I think that's what's important: to bring the people of Ontario up to date, at least as we see it. That's what opposition days are about. I respectfully

think that it's important for people in Ontario, without any partisan aspect to it, to listen to our leader, John Tory, and the purpose of this opposition day motion.

I'm just going to read it, because it's important always to have a reminder of where we are. This is the opposition day motion. It says: "That in the opinion of this House, the government should spend every single taxpayer dollar wisely and with respect for the taxpayers."

I pick up on the main themes that he talked about during his opening remarks to remind people that this debate really is about respect—and not just of taxpayers' dollars or the hard-working people of Ontario—and it's about trust. And trust and respect go together. It's about, at the end of the day, integrity. All of those things around the life of a politician today are absolutely pivotal in giving them your vote, your support. It's that trust and that bond that we're reminding people of today, sort of a report card of where we are as we move into the winter season.

Our leader, John Tory, gave three specific examples that are quite understandable and digestible by the people of Ontario, but they also speak to the larger issue of the respect and integrity that is fundamental to the role of public service. He talked about the 50 or more promises—in fact there were 200 promises, I think—made in the red book by the McGuinty government during the election.

1640

What I'm so disappointed at is that it's fine to say things when people ask you, "Would you raise taxes or would you not?" or "Would you support agriculture?" or "Would you support children with autism?" What they said to the parents of an autistic child was, "Yes, we'll fix the problem," and they haven't fixed the problem. That, in some languages, is called—there's a word for it; we're not allowed to say it here. But it's really not being forthright with the people of Ontario. When they ask you a question, it's the respect and integrity and the trust—if you tell them you're going to do something, they should expect that you're going to do it.

What is really important to look at in relationship to this is—I can remember the ads; I can see them. They were very well done ads. Those ads were with the Premier leaning up against a lamppost. I didn't quite get the ad, technically, the set-up for it, but he was leaning up against a lamp and saying, "I won't raise your taxes, but I won't lower them either."

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): It was a tree.

Mr. O'Toole: Well, it was a tree or whatever. It looked like a drunk by a lamppost, actually. But he was leaning up against a tree and he said, "I won't raise your taxes, but I won't lower them either." The very first thing he did—it's now down in history. It's the largest single tax hike in the history of Ontario. With the stroke of a pen, \$2.5 billion of additional revenue, but not one cent for autism, not one cent for agriculture and not one cent for the people of Ontario. The arrogance and smugness sometimes in here, as if they had committed no wrong.

You ask your neighbour, "Are you better off?" and you will find there are longer waiting lists, there's trouble in the emergency rooms and there's trouble in our schools. Almost all of them are in deficit. We know that. It isn't better, it isn't going to be better, and the reason is simple: You can't trust someone who doesn't respect what they say.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti (Scarborough Southwest): I guess we're skipping in rotation here, but anyway, very briefly, I wanted to indicate that with this motion in front of us today, the key question or the key point to remember is that the Liberals came to office with a \$5.56-billion deficit. That's the inheritance that was left by the Conservative government. We've reduced that. If there's any waste at all, it comes from the previous Conservative government. They need to own up to that and deal with that before they can start going after and nitpicking on small little points like the ones today.

We've got better hospitals and better schools than we've had in the past, and we continue to improve them. I'm proud to stand here today to support our government, and I will certainly be voting against this motion today.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge): For three long years, the McGuinty government has mismanaged and squandered Ontario's money. As John Tory pointed out, this government spent \$6 million to drop a letter from an acronym. That's disgraceful. Would that \$6 million not have been better spent on Ontario's disabled, the people who need the money the most, Ontario's most vulnerable? In the time this government has been in office, they've failed to take responsibility for the disabled. The fact is, when adjusted for inflation, Ontario's disabled pensions are hundreds less than in 1997, under the previous government. These are not my calculations but those of the Toronto Star on August 26, 2006.

If that is not bad enough, this government is now bamboozling Ontarians through advertising. The McGuinty government has spent \$2 million to tell residents of Ontario that they could now see a doctor. Before that TV ad ran, there were 20,000 residents in Cambridge riding who were without a family doctor. Today, since that ad ran, there are still 20,000 men, women and children without a family doctor in Cambridge.

It has become increasingly apparent that this government will say anything to get re-elected. I find this ad campaign totally offensive—to say to someone, "The doctor will see you now," when there is no doctor in sight. In that same say-anything-to-get-elected ad campaign, this government also said that wait times were down. I think the people of Ontario and Cambridge who have been waiting six months for an MRI would disagree.

This government cannot balance the budget. However, the McGuinty government seems to be swimming in money, so much so that they could waste \$219,000 to redesign a logo and another \$20 million on raises to government agencies and boards. But what is the result for Ontarians' bare pocketbooks? Ontarians are completely overtaxed and continue to pay for more mismanagement and wasteful spending. It is time for this government to

take responsibility for its mismanagement. It's time to start making real investment in Ontario. The people of Ontario deserve a better government than one that runs on empty promises. Ontarians want results now. I, for one, am tired of seeing headlines that read, "A \$30-Million Investment," and when you read the fine print, the \$30 million isn't coming for 30 years. Ontarians need assistance now.

This government seems to have forgotten that when you make a promise, you keep it. I guess breaking promises becomes second nature after you've broken more than 50 of them. I would ask this government to start working with the people of Ontario, stop the mismanagement and waste, and address the real needs of Ontarians, especially the most vulnerable.

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): I'm just so pleased to stand here in the House this afternoon on behalf of all New Democrats to speak on this debate, because it gives us an opportunity, quite frankly, to review a little bit of what we've seen here over the last three years.

However, I just want to remind my good friends in the Conservative caucus, when they're saying, "When we form the government," that I wouldn't presume to know who's going to form the government next time. I've been around this place long enough to know that elections are decided in 27 days. I've seen election swings go from where David Peterson was at 60% to where New Democrats have won, and vice versa with the Tories. So you don't know what's going to happen. I would just say that there are going to be three political parties to choose from in the next election, and I'm encouraging those people to pick the NDP. I want to put that on the record.

Mr. Murdoch: Are you biased?

Mr. Bisson: Of course I'm biased. I believe in New Democrats. Bill, you had your chance. The member could have come to the New Democrats earlier in this mandate. Anyway, enough of that. Let's get on to the debate.

This is an interesting motion, because I actually agree with some of what's in here, quite frankly. The government has done a number of things that have cost a fair amount of money, and you've got to scratch your head, as they say, and wonder what they're up to. One comes to mind that I think is kind of an interesting one. Earlier this year, I think in August of this past summer, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. came before a committee in order to do what has not been done in about 10 years in this assembly: the review of an actual government agency. You see, we have this committee called the government agencies and appointments committee, and half of its mandate is to review agencies of the government. It hasn't done that in 10 years. As a result of some negotiations and discussions amongst ourselves as New Democrats, the government and the official opposition, we finally agreed that it would be a good idea to do a review. So we had the Ontario lottery corporation come before a committee and answer questions as to some of their practices.

One of the things that I thought was really interesting is that when the Conservative caucus raised the issue of \$6 million being spent by the lottery corporation to change its branding—they spent \$6 million by using a high-priced ad firm to do so—I asked a number of questions, and one of the questions I asked the chair was, "First of all, isn't this agency governed by Bill 8, the French Language Services Act?" The answer was yes. I said, "You spent \$6 million to review changing your logo, and it's not even bilingual?" I thought, "Why did we spend \$6 million if we didn't ask that as a basic question?" We all know that agencies of the province are governed by Bill 8, and you would think, at the very least, that their logo would reflect that within the work they did. What was more surprising was the response of the chair. He was actually surprised: "Oh, my God. It isn't?"

It just made me think, "Well, maybe there's something to this." Maybe there isn't the type of oversight we need at times to make sure that some of the decisions that are made are made in such a way as to make sure that provincial policies are consistently applied to different agencies or ministries when it comes to carrying out their mandates or policies, whatever they might be. So in this particular case, six million bucks spent, and we've changed the logo. And I've got to remember, all they basically did was take the "C" out of "OLGC." They changed the logo and we couldn't even get that right, so I just thought that was kind of interesting.

1650

The other one was the redesign that was done to the trillium logo—same thing. At one point you say to yourself, "We understand that governments, as businesses, have to change and modernize with the times." For example, as a business, you can't always be using the same slogan when you're advertising on television, so I do understand that there's a need to reflect today's society by way of some of the symbols whereby we identify our institutions, but at a time when we're fighting to provide basic services to people in our communities of all types, it just seems to me that some of those expenditures could be better used.

We had, for example, in the Legislature earlier today a whole discussion, as we've been having for the last, I guess, four or five weeks that the House has been back in session, on the issue of the water crisis in our First Nations communities. We all know, as members—we see it, we look at the papers, we see what's going out on the news. If it's not Cat Lake that's in a water crisis, it's Kashechewan; if it's not Kashechewan, it's Marten Falls; if it's not Marten Falls, it's Pikangikum. We know that the federal government has dropped the ball completely when it comes to making sure that the people who live on reserves, our First Nations, have been provided with clean drinking water.

I would like to see some of the money we have actually spent on some of these things, such as the \$6 million to change the logo at the OLG—use that money in order to be able to augment what the federal government

should be doing by providing good infrastructure when it comes to clean drinking water.

I want to tell you a story. I was talking to Chief Elijah Moonias about two nights ago, the chief of Marten Falls, and here he is, extremely frustrated. It's almost like a Kashechewan all over again, right? He has a lift station in the sewer system that has failed and keeps on failing, and when it backs up it overflows into a creek. Guess where the creek goes? It goes right by the intake of the water plant. What is it with the federal government? Every time they design a water plant, they have to put the intake next to the sewer system. God knows what they're doing. Why do we need to have that? I believe the province can play a role. We're much better at water management and we have much stronger legislation to care for these things—but there's what's happening in his community.

There's been a battle back and forth between the Ministry of Indian and Northern Affairs—we call it "INAC"—and the community to try to get the sewer lift station fixed. When I was talking to him on the phone on Monday or Tuesday night—whatever night it was—Chief Elijah Moonias said, "They've done a temporary fix, and now we're in this paper war trying to figure out how we're going to get this funded in order to do the permanent fix."

I just say to all members in this House and anybody else watching, can you imagine if the sewer lift station in downtown Toronto or Timmins or Sudbury were to fail and we had to wait for the federal government to fix it and to fill out the necessary paperwork to fund it? We'd be sending in the army, as Mel Lastman did when it was snowing in Toronto one day. Mel Lastman called in the army. Boom: We had snowplows out on the street.

It really makes me mad, because these people are First Nations people. They are the first citizens of this country, of this province, and we should treat them with respect. We should provide the type of infrastructure that everybody takes for granted.

But here is his first problem: His first problem is that the federal government is slow to come up with the funds needed in order to fix the lift station. So we have an existing problem that we know continues to fail, is putting people at risk, and here we are in the end of a situation where, yet again, the federal government has dropped the ball. I say to the province, let's become part of the solution. We are in the province of Ontario. We are experts when it comes to drinking water. We have the toughest legislation and regulation in the country—something to be proud of. We have the expertise within the Ministry of the Environment and within the Clean Water Agency to operate and run water plants and to make sure that our operators are well-trained. Why not sit down with the federal government and the First Nations and negotiate a transfer of those responsibilities over to the province, where we're best suited to deal with it?

I want to give you a little analogy. The federal government's capacity to deal with things like water is like having a baseball team without a second bench. It is like going into a baseball game without a reliever. The federal

government is like a nine-person baseball team with maybe one person as a relief, and sometimes that relief is a pitcher; sometimes that relief is a runner or a batter, as need be. They don't have the capacity, the depth of bench, to be able to respond to issues as we do in the province. Why? Because the federal government is not in the water business. They're not in education. That is not their primary mandate. Those are the mandates of the provinces, and that's why I argue that we should use some of the money that is listed in this particular debate as far as some of the millions of dollars that we have wasted in advertising and other things and take that money and say, "Listen: We are prepared, as a province, to sit down with the federal government and our First Nations leaders and say that we are interested in playing a role to solve the problem of clean drinking water in those communities." I think that's something that would be welcomed, certainly by the citizens of our First Nations communities, but also by the leadership and most of the public of Ontario. I think most people understand there are some basic things that we have to do in a society, and, clearly, clean drinking water is one of those. So we've got to get moving in that direction.

As I look at this list, I just look at what we could do: \$6 million to the OLG, \$219,000 for the trillium, \$20 million in regard to various boards and agencies, \$2 million for partisan advertising, and the list gets stronger. We know they're going to be spending a lot more money on political advertising a little bit later. We would be able to do something very reasonable when it comes to our response and, quite frankly, to do something that would show that Ontario is prepared to put their money where their mouth is.

I know, for example, in the province of Quebec, as in Manitoba and others, those provincial governments play a much stronger role when it comes to helping find solutions for First Nations communities. I just look at the east and west side of the James Bay. I invite anybody to take the road and drive up the east side of the James Bay on the Quebec side and you will get to communities that have paved roads and good infrastructure. It isn't a Cadillac set-up, but it's a heck of a lot better than what we see in Ontario. Here's the point: You can at least drive up the east coast of the James Bay, because there is a road. On the Ontario side, you don't even have a road. You've got to go on a winter road in the winter when it's frozen or you've got to go by barge or plane. How are you able to function in communities in that kind of set-up? All I'm saying is the province has got to become part of the solution.

I want to say I see my good friend the member from Hamilton Centre, East or whatever riding it is, up there, Madam Horwath, with her son and her friend. I say hello and welcome to the Legislature. I hope you have learned something about what mom does when she comes to work here every day. She's not going to be here tomorrow. She's going to be doing some other things and we're going to miss her terribly, just to let her know. I just thought I'd do that to embarrass her. I didn't know what I was going to say about her, but I said something.

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): Good-looking kid.

Mr. Bisson: Yes, just like my children. It's amazing how our children grow up and look better than their parents. I don't know what happened there, but anyway, that's kind of the story.

Interjection.

Mr. Bisson: Well, it's true. If I bring both my daughters, Julie and Natalie, in here, you wouldn't believe they're my kids, because they're a lot better-looking than I'm ever going to be or ever was. Anyway, I'm digressing.

I want to come back to the point of what we can be doing, rather than spending money on partisan political advertising or changing logos or whatever, and that is, we could be taking a look, for example, in my area at how we're able to assist those communities that have been decimated by job losses, specifically in the forest industry across northeastern and northwestern Ontario. You've seen the list. We've all seen the debates. Communities like Smooth Rock Falls, Kapuskasing, Hearst, Constance Lake, Opasatika, Chapleau, Timmins, all of them have been affected by downturns in the forestry sector, and it's been really tough.

For example, we've been dealing with Minister Ramsay on one particular issue now for the better part of six months, and that is to provide emergency assistance to the northern corridor assessment services so that those employees who are being laid off and have been laid off are able to get counselling services when it comes to credit management and substance abuse, some of those things that happen once a person is not working anymore.

To date, the government has not provided any emergency assistance to that particular organization. We know—and I'm talking to Lawrence Stenabaugh, who's the president of that particular organization—that there is a 25% increase in demand, because there are a lot of unemployed workers who have turned to the bottle, who are having financial problems, and it's manifesting itself in their family lives. So we would say, imagine if we just took a part of some of the savings that are in this motion. We're talking about \$219,000 to redesign the Ontario trillium logo. Well, \$219,000 to the workers on the Highway 11 corridor, which is in both Mr. Ramsay's riding and my riding, would go a long way to respond to the problems that the north corridor assessment services have seen as a result of the loss of employment within their particular industry. So I say we could probably put that money to better use.

We take a look at what's happening to those communities as far as employment opportunities. We all want a strong economy so that people are able to live with dignity and young people growing up in our communities, specifically in the north, are able to stay there once they've finished school and done college or university, and are able to get employment in their fields. But it's becoming more difficult because there is a lack of vision, I would argue, on the part of both provincial and federal governments to really respond to the economies of northern Ontario and, I would argue, the rural

economy generally. This is not just a northern Ontario issue. Part of the problem, I think, is that we are very urban-centred in our outlooks. I'm not saying that's wrong, that we shouldn't pay attention to Toronto and Hamilton and larger municipalities—they have their particular challenges too and they need the attention of both the federal and provincial governments to assist them—but the problem is, it's become basically the dominant factor in the debate about how and what a government can do in order to assist a particular region.

1700

Somebody pointed out the other day something that I've always known, but it's always interesting for debate, and that is, if you look at how many members come from urban centres as compared to rural areas, it's like night and day. Probably two thirds of members now come from urban centres across Ontario—Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Toronto and others. About 75% of our members come from those cities. There is a smaller percentage of people now who come from rural centres, and it's a complete reversal. It used to be at one time that a majority of members came from rural Ontario, and as a result, a lot of the policies reflected that. The government tried to do things to assist those economies in rural Ontario to grow and prosper. As a result, we've had the successes of Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay—those areas that used to be small communities that, with the assistance of government, have been able to transform themselves.

I look at Sudbury. My good friend Breanna who's from Kapuskasing might remember some of this, and that is, Sudbury went through huge downturns. Well, you might not remember. This was in the 1970s. I'm dating myself. But in the 1970s, Sudbury went through huge downturns in their economy because of what was happening in mining. Inco alone went from over 20,000 workers down to less than 5,000. The governments could have said, "Well, we're not going to look at that. We're just going to let que sera sera happen." Instead, the federal and provincial governments stepped up to the plate. We invested in training, we invested in infrastructure, we assisted in economic development. We transferred entire ministries to that community. The taxation revenue centre in Sudbury employs—I don't know how many people—close to a thousand people, I understand. The Ministry of Northern Development and Mines relocated to that community. We did things as governments to support that community. As a result, it is a vibrant, successful community today. Sudbury, I would say, is one of the models we should probably look at more closely as to what can be done in other parts.

Imagine if we were to take that approach to communities like Kapuskasing or Hearst or Timmins or Kirkland Lake or Atikokan or Fort Frances or Kenora or wherever it might be—or, I would argue, Cornwall or some of the other communities in southwestern or southeastern or central Ontario—and we were to say, "We as a provincial government—and we would encourage the federal government to work with us—are going

to put in place a strategy by which we are going to put efforts into making sure that all parts of the Ontario economy are able to benefit and grow." If we were able to do that, well, at the end of the day, we're all winners, because it means our economy would be stronger, there would be less reliance on government for assistance when it comes to social assistance or unemployment or welfare or whatever it might be, and we would be creating net worth within our economies that, at the end, would generate taxes for the government.

I guess this is where I depart from my friends in the Conservative caucus. Their approach has been—and if you look at this particular motion, this is where they're going—that all a government has to do to assist communities to survive and to strive is to cut taxes and get out of the way. Well, I disagree. If government gets out of the way, I'll tell you what will happen: absolutely nothing. I have an opportunity, as we all do, to speak at schools when we're back in our ridings. I always start my debate with the students when I go into the grade 5s and grade 10s and others to speak about government by saying, "Who here would like not to pay taxes?" And everybody puts their hand up. There's not one person who doesn't have their hand up, who says they want to pay taxes. And I say, "Okay. We'll have a little exercise here, and the exercise is, we're going to have a vote. The vote is, those who want to stop paying taxes, put your hands up, vote yes"—they all put their hands up—"those no"—hardly anybody puts their hand up. I say, "Fine. As of today, you pay no taxes. By the way, get out of the school or give me a cheque. Your mom is sick, your dad is sick, your grandfather needs a doctor and needs to go to the hospital. Bring your credit card, because that's what the alternative is."

This is where I have a big difference with Mr. Tory and the Conservative caucus. They couch the language of prosperity—we all believe all regions of Ontario should be prosperous when it comes to the economy—with discussions around, "Oh, we've got to get out of the way of business and allow business to flourish." All right. So we're going to let business do what it wants: pollute our rivers and creeks and lakes, basically infringe on other people around them? We're not going to be interested in those particular activities? Of course not; government has a role to play in order to assist business to strive.

For example, I see my good friend the Minister of Northern Development and Mines here, and he would know as well as I do that one of the issues for us in northern Ontario is transportation. All of our industries that are located in northern Ontario have a much higher cost than it is in other parts of the province to transport their goods to and from market: bring raw materials in to do whatever it is you are going to do and transport them out as finished materials. Government has got to be there to provide road infrastructure, rail infrastructure, ways of being able to reduce the distance and cost to transport goods—not so much the distance, but the cost is what I talk about.

I say to my friends in the Conservative caucus, I agree with part of what's in your motion because I too believe

as a New Democrat that fiscally we have to be responsible; we have to spend our money where we're going to get the biggest bang for our buck. I agree with the Conservative caucus: The Liberals spending money on partisan political advertising is going to do absolutely nothing to help the members in our First Nations communities to get water or people in rural or northern Ontario to get economic development opportunities.

I agree with them on that point, but it's not by saying we're going to eliminate taxes that that's going to happen. I want to propose something else. I was at a debate with the chamber of commerce a little while back—it was earlier this fall, in September—and somebody made that point and they said, "The problem with the government of Ontario is that they're not providing tax cuts in order to make business flourish. If only the government could provide minimal tax relief, I guarantee you the economy would be booming here." I reminded you then that the federal Conservative government had just reduced taxes and we still had problems because, at the end of the day, tax cuts are not necessarily the stimulus that people think they are when it comes to economic development. What are stimuli are programs that are specifically earmarked in order to get a certain result out of the money invested. Training, I believe, is a huge one.

I had the opportunity, as we all do, to visit employers in our ridings, and I'm told, over and over again, as I go into small manufacturing companies or I go into the service industry, that apprenticeship training, training in order to bring workers up to a standard so that they're a value to their employers, is a huge cost of doing business, and for the small employer it's a real problem because once they're trained, they move on to the bigger operators. For example, somebody will go work in a plant, let's say in Mattice, where they do the transformation of wood to a value-added product, and then all of a sudden the person's trained and they get a job working somewhere else, let's say at Tembec or Grant waferboard or wherever it might be. It's a problem. We need to socialize the cost of training so that it's not entirely borne by the employer or the employee. I think that's one of the places you have to invest.

We really need to put in place strategies that look at communication and transportation so that we lessen the distances in Ontario when it comes to doing business, so that you're not competing with an unfair advantage. Somebody said to me at a chamber of commerce annual meeting that I went to about a year ago, "You talk about subsidizing transportation in northern Ontario." I said, "What's wrong with the concept?" He says, "That's crazy. Nobody would do that." I said, "Highway 401 is a public highway. It's paid for by the taxpayers of Ontario. It is completely subsidized and it is the link that connects operators of plants from Windsor all the way to Cornwall. You think that's not subsidized?" If the 401 wasn't there, the economy of southern Ontario wouldn't work. We don't think twice about investing money and making a better Highway 401 and other important roads in order to allow business to prosper.

So I argue, in northern Ontario we don't need to only invest in roads and rail, but we need to find ways of reducing costs of transportation, and I believe we have to look at differential costs on fuel. We have to do something maybe around fuel taxes as an opportunity. We have to look at Ontario Northland: probably need a higher subsidy. If we're going to be able to provide transportation infrastructures for industry along the ONR, the ACR and other lines—and maybe we need to look at expanding that—we need to provide a subsidy. There's not an economy in the world that operates a train system without subsidizing it, and there's a reason we do that.

I say to my friends on the opposition benches, I agree with some of the things that you have in this particular motion. I agree with you that, at the end, we should be frugal in the way that we spend our dollars. We should be very—how would I say—strong about how we're going to spend dollars and clear on what we want to do. I think a lot of the expenses that you have here are expenses that I agree could have been done differently as far as savings.

I look forward to the rest of the debate and I look forward to what people have to say about this.

1710

Mrs. Carol Mitchell (Huron–Bruce): It certainly is my pleasure to rise today and set the record straight, as we say around our area. I've got to say, you know, that to sit here and listen to the allegations from the opposite side of the House about transparency, fiscal responsibility, on and on—the words roll out of their mouths. I hear that, and when we took over government there was a \$5.6-billion deficit. What are they thinking? Do they not remember? I can't imagine how you can come and say things like this. And it wasn't just the \$5.6 billion; it was the deficit we had in our social structure, the deficit we had in our health care structure, the deficit we had in our health infrastructure as well.

When we hear, time after time, speaker after speaker, the allegations that are made, it is just absolutely ludicrous to me, with their checkered history, their fiscal disclosure, their transparency. It's absolutely preposterous.

I want to add even more than that. There have been a lot of comments made about rural communities and the McGuinty government. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, for one, talked about the Clean Water Act. There seems to be some concern from that side of the House that the Clean Water Act—in their minds, you can vote against it and still be in favour of clean water. Do you know what? You can't. A plus B does not equal C, and they know it. And they committed to it during their election platform; they committed to the recommendations from the Walkerton inquiry. But that was then and this is now, and that's how it goes.

The other thing I want to say too is that the dollars that were allocated to the Clean Water Act—we understand it's a local solution and they're working through those numbers. But I want to remind the other side of the House about the Nutrient Management Act. I know they don't like to talk about that because of how difficult it

was. But how much money was committed from that side of the House for nutrient management? I can tell you, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): How much?

Mrs. Mitchell: Zip. Nothing. They've forgotten that part too.

For the rest of my time, I want to talk not only from the province of Ontario's perspective but specifically about the riding of Huron–Bruce and how different it is today. One of the speakers, from Durham, talked about, is it better today? Do you know what? It is better today. It is. The people of Ontario say things are better today. That's the test. You've said that before, and it was something you said after the budget. I can tell you what I'm hearing in rural Ontario. What's the test? The test is, are things better today? And the answer is, they absolutely are.

It's not just in education—smaller class sizes—it's in health care. I remind the members from the other side that I come from a community called Clinton, and they were closing our hospital. The turmoil that caused within my community is something that will stay with me all my life. I know that the opposite side, when they ran for government—everybody remembers: “We will not touch health care,” and “We will not touch education.” Do you remember? And then what happened? Well, you know what: first cut, health care; second cut, education. The next thing you know, there are hospitals closing all over the place. That was the commitment to rural Ontario.

Until you've gone through something like that in your community, when what you rely on for health care is taken away—I want to add too that this wasn't the first government that tried to take away our hospital. They were the second Conservative government that tried to take away our hospital. It was the father of one of the members who came at that time to do that job. It didn't happen then, and that was good work that was done in all of our communities.

But all the investment we have made collectively throughout the province of Ontario—you know, \$30 billion for infrastructure.

When I think about all that has been needed for us to move forward as a province: Ontario is a very proud province and we are all so pleased to be a part of the future of Ontario. But Ontario can only go forward with roads you can drive on, bridges you can cross over on. We have to be able to provide adequate health care, we have to be able to provide adequate education if we're looking to the future, which the McGuinty government is. They have a clear focus on what is needed and what we need to move forward. That infrastructure is being replaced; it's being enhanced. Quite honestly, if the previous government had had a better handle on what the people of Ontario need to move forward, we would not have such a backlog of work that is required today.

In Move Ontario, just specifically in the riding of Huron–Bruce, \$11 million came to the riding for roads in one year. What did the previous government do with the

roads? They downloaded the roads, roads that were in ill repair, on to rural communities that weren't able to pay for them. That was just one of a series of the many services that were downloaded over the years. So when I hear from the opposite side of the House about accountability, transparency, we're all of that and we've made a commitment. The people of Ontario understand what it's going to take to get this proud province back and in the proper place within all of Canada, and that's to lead.

We can be proud of the work that we have done, and we are. But we also understand that you can't leave things for so long and expect to get caught up in a short time. We recognize that, and that's why the investments have been there and they will come forward. But if we hadn't had a party who slashed and burned policies, we would not have to do so much good work that is needed throughout the province.

When we come forward with a fiscal package, we bring on our business community as well so that they have an understanding of where we are going, what is needed and how they can be a part of that. That clearly is being demonstrated every day within the province.

I wish I had more time. This is something that I certainly have been very passionate about: the commitment we have made to rural Ontario. I just want to say: \$910 million to our agricultural community for income stabilization. I know that there is hurt out in the agricultural community. There isn't one member who does not recognize that. We have come so far in what we have done to give the tools to the agricultural community to move forward through renewables, through income stabilization. We've done it; we've been there. Where was the previous government when pork prices were tanking? They were tanking.

It's abundantly clear to all the members of this House that any accusation of wrongdoing by the official opposition should be taken with a grain of salt. It should be just as clear to everyone that the McGuinty government is striving to renew the province's infrastructure and give its sense of integrity back to Ontario.

Mr. Ted Arnott (Waterloo–Wellington): This resolution raises one of the fundamental responsibilities that we have as elected representatives. Of course, I'm referring to the way the current provincial government demonstrates absolute disregard for the revenues received by the treasury, and the Legislature, being vigilant in its oversight responsibility, questioning whether the government of the day is making wise and democratically accountable expenditures. This is without a doubt one of the most important roles played by members of the Ontario Legislature.

Hardworking families pay their taxes to the government. These families have every right to expect that their tax dollars will be put to the best possible use for the best possible education, health care, safe streets and homes, environmental protection and transportation services, to name but a few. All of these things are needed to sustain and improve our economy and our quality of life. Taxpayers rightly expect and deserve a government that is

accountable. For a government to be accountable, it must be trusted. It must never, ever waste public dollars or spend recklessly or frivolously. In short, Ontario's families deserve truth and integrity in the management of the province's finances. In reality, on this measure, McGuinty Liberal government is tragically failing to meet the expectations of the people of Ontario.

1720

I ask members of this House to look back to a little over three years ago and again picture Dalton McGuinty, running to be Premier at that time, gazing into the camera and promising that he would not raise taxes. Then, in their first budget, the McGuinty Liberal government brought in the biggest tax increase in the province's history. To say the least, he broke faith with Ontario voters and, since then, taxpayers have to be cynical about the McGuinty government's motives as they pertain to our public finances.

The people in Waterloo region, Wellington county and the town of Halton Hills know that, with over 50 broken promises and a lack of any real, concrete plan for Ontario's future, the government of Dalton McGuinty will say anything to get power and continue muddling through any way they can to hold on to it. As our leader, the member for Dufferin–Peel–Wellington–Grey, demonstrated with this list of hundreds of millions of dollars of wasteful spending, the McGuinty government has now become bogged down by their own mismanagement, waste and, ultimately, by the politically charged motives behind almost all of their public actions. They are very good at photo ops but they are good at little else.

The Ontario Liberal Party can't seem to resist wasting money. Consider their convention in Toronto last weekend. According to the Toronto Star, the Ontario Liberal Party paid about C\$65,000 to an American political strategist, James Carville, for an 18-minute speech advising the Liberal Party how to use American-style political tactics in the coming provincial election. Mr. Carville, a Democratic Party operative in the United States, is known for his bare-knuckles, take-no-prisoners, nasty personal attacks, which may have inspired the Ontario Liberals' failed approach in the Parkdale–High Park by-election. In any case, I would expect that any supporter of the Ontario Liberal Party who has recently written a cheque to the Ontario Liberal fund or any of their riding associations would have to wonder why the party they support is wasting their money on a questionable expenditure like this.

As we all know, financial donations to political parties in Ontario are eligible for a generous tax credit of up to 75% of the donation, which means in practice that, to a substantial degree, taxpayers' money assists in the financing of our election campaigns. So it's taxpayers' money we're talking about. If the government votes this motion down, as I suspect they may, they will once again be demonstrating their callous disregard for taxpayers' money and giving the voters of Ontario one more reason to send them back to the opposition benches in 11 months' time.

Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt): In the time that I have this afternoon for this debate, I want to focus on the government's autism budget. I want to express my dismay, my frustration and my criticism that every dollar that was announced for the autism budget was in fact not spent on autism initiatives. What a waste that has been in light of the huge number of autistic children languishing on waiting lists, desperate for IBI treatments.

If you take a look—and we have, because we have made a number of freedom-of-information requests to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to get at the numbers—it's interesting to look at the expenditures versus what was announced under the Liberal government. I want to begin in 2003-04, the last six months of the fiscal year that the Liberals were in power. In that year, the total budget announced for autism initiatives was \$80 million, but at the end of the fiscal year it was discovered that about \$2.6 million of that went to other children's programs within the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, another \$1.5 million was diverted to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and \$32 million—\$32 million—was returned, unspent, to the consolidated revenue fund.

In 2004-05, the total budget that was announced for autism by this government was \$89 million. At the end of the fiscal year, \$21.5 million was spent on other children's programs within the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. In the last fiscal year, 2005-06, the government did better—after three years. Of the \$99 million that was announced for autism, about \$1.5 million returned to the consolidated revenue fund. Over the three years that the Liberals have been in power, the \$55 million that was announced for autism initiatives was either unspent or diverted to other programs within the ministry or to other ministries.

I want you to contrast that against the wait list for IBI treatment, because it is very telling. Speaker, you will know—because you've dealt with families in your own riding, some of whom have been here more than once, whose children are waiting for IBI service—that IBI is one of the most effective treatments for autistic children that has come about. It is clear that the government made some very significant promises to parents of autistic children in the last election, promises that included ending the discrimination against children over the age of six who had autism and who needed IBI treatment.

It's important to point out that the only reason the government actually ended that discrimination was because of a court ruling by Justice Kitley in April 1995, where in her decision she said very publicly that the Ontario government was violating the charter rights of Ontario's autistic children by discriminating against them, both on the basis of their age and their disability. She also went on to say in her decision, which was an excellent decision after over a year of hearing the arguments on both sides, that this government's Ministry and Minister of Education were violating the Education Act, because the minister was failing to ensure that children could get access to special education programs without

having to pay a fee for it. She was particularly critical of the Minister of Education and in her decision actually said that he had in fact imposed barriers on children, autistic children in particular, who needed very specific supports in the classroom and weren't getting them. She was extremely critical of this government. The point is, it was only because of that particular ruling, which was a charter ruling, that the government was finally forced to keep the promise it had made over 13 months before, during the election campaign, to end the discrimination of children over the age of six.

If you look at what else the government promised, it was to provide treatment to these children. It really is worth the time and effort to put on the record the waiting lists for that same treatment, because, frankly, under this government, that waiting list has grown enormously. At the end of March 2003—this was under the Conservatives—there were 76 children waiting for IBI treatment. These are children, I remind you, who had already gone through assessments, who had already been deemed to have autism on the spectrum severe enough to qualify for the IBI program. So 76 children were on the wait list at the end of March 2003. At the end of March 2004, there were 89 children waiting for IBI treatment. The Liberals had been in government for about six months now. At the end of March 2005, 399 children were waiting for IBI treatment. We're seeing a significant increase in that particular fiscal year. But by the end of March 2006, there were 753 children waiting for IBI treatment—753 children who have been assessed, who have been deemed to qualify for this program because their autism is so severe; 753 kids languishing on a waiting list, desperate for IBI treatment.

Why is it, or better yet, how could it be that in the face of those huge numbers of children languishing on a waiting list, this government, over a three-year period, could ever have underspent or diverted \$55 million from the autism budget to other initiatives?

1730

I don't understand why the government, looking at the waiting lists in the same way we were seeing the waiting lists grow, didn't ensure that every penny of the autism budget was spent and that within the autism budget itself, if there was underspending in some certain initiatives, the government would then divert that money directly into the IBI treatment program. That didn't happen, and today we have 753 kids sitting on a list waiting for treatment, and we have a government that underspent in this program by \$55 million. What a waste. What an incredible waste.

This year alone, in the money that went unspent, you probably could have had another 30 families receive IBI treatment. That's significant, Speaker, because as you and I know, it is incredibly difficult, if not impossible, for families to fund IBI treatment on their own. For a child who receives IBI at 40 hours a week—and that, regrettably, is what is required for a child who is severe on the spectrum—over a year, the cost runs in the order of \$50,000 to \$60,000. It's clear that at \$50,000 to \$60,000

there aren't many parents in Ontario who could ever afford to fund that out of their own pockets, despite their various efforts to finance their house, refinance their house, borrow money from their families, have fundraisers and the whole nine yards. You can't sustain that level of funding of treatment out of your own pocket for very long.

So it is imperative that if these kids are ever going to get treatment, they get it through the government program, because it is the rare parent, the rare family, in Ontario who can afford to fund this treatment all on their own.

I was at an autism rally in Sudbury in the last couple of weeks and had a chance to speak to a number of parents, some of whom are getting IBI treatment for their children finally, after waiting a long time on a waiting list, and some who aren't. One in particular, Tina Lendrum, talked to me. They had just finished a fundraiser in the Metis community about a month before to try to raise money for IBI because she and her husband are trying to fund, out of their own pocket, a program for their child. It certainly isn't a 40-hour-a-week program, because they can't afford to pay the therapist to do that. But they do have a limited program in place, and they're trying to fund that out of their own pocket. There was a fundraising effort in the Metis community to help them out. I said to myself, how is it that in Ontario in 2006, when the government had a \$3-billion surplus in its last budget in March, that we force families of autistic children into a position when, literally, their community has to have a fundraising effort in order to pay for the treatment that their autistic child so desperately needs? How is it that \$55 million over the last three years could have gone unspent or was diverted to other programs by this government instead of ensuring that every penny, every dime, of money that was left over in the autism budget actually went to treatment, especially in the face of the waiting lists, which are growing by leaps and bounds?

We can pay for IBI now or we can not give IBI to kids and we can pay later, because these kids will end up in trouble with the law, will end up in group homes, will end up in institutions. We should be making the investment now because, after all, that was actually the promise that Dalton McGuinty made to the parents of autistic children in the last election when he asked for their vote.

Let's make sure from now on every cent goes into this treatment program.

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): I certainly want to stand in support of this motion on government waste. The list is so long that we could be here until the cows come home, as they say. But I'm going to concentrate on just one issue today, and that is the \$6 million to remove the "C" from OLG. I've heard the minister talk about how that was a good investment. That was a good investment because it's going to improve the efficiencies and improve the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. Hooey. Goodness gracious, spending \$6 million to take a letter out of a logo. There's only one

reason that was done, and that was because Dalton McGuinty wanted to hand the cheque over to his buddies over at Bensimon Byrne. That's why that was done—not because it was going to do anything positive for the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.—not at all—but because it was going to fulfill a commitment Dalton McGuinty made to his friends over at Bensimon Byrne to make sure that some of the Ontario taxpayers' money got into their pockets through a contract that is questionable at best—over \$20 million for this company now, and a retainer of \$78,000 a month just to be there.

That's the same company that did those ads when Dalton McGuinty stood up and faced Ontarians in the last provincial election and said, "I won't raise your taxes." This is what he does to the taxpayers, and that's what he does for his friends. Six million dollars—that's just the beginning of it. Bensimon Byrne's trademark is going to be on every little thing that comes out of here.

What about this advertising campaign? Thirty-one million dollars in the budget is being spent this year to promote partisan advertising on the part of the McGuinty government. Shame on them. Shame on them telling us about, "The doctor is in. The doctor will see you now." I'll tell you, when I go around rural Ontario, I know lots of places where the doctor's not in and they're worried if the doctor's going to be coming in, because you know what? Those doctors are getting older and some of them are retiring, and this government is not doing anything to address the doctor shortage across this province.

Yes, they threw out some emergency money cash last week—we'll see when it flows—to get the media off the subject for now, but the fact is, you've got to deal with those situations and you've got to deal with them now.

I'm going to pass this on to my colleague from York North.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? The member from Peterborough.

Mr. Leal: I only have a minute today, but one of the things I'd like to talk about is the \$5.5-billion deficit that was left in 2003 that has always been the backdrop of the kind of challenges we've faced in government. It was interesting that the Progressive Conservative Party always denied that that deficit existed, but we had to call in Erik Peters, the very distinguished former Auditor General of Ontario, to verify that indeed that \$5.5-billion deficit was there. But through prudent financial management over the last three years, we've been able to reduce that deficit significantly and make key investments in the health care field.

Interestingly enough, the Fraser Institute, that bible that I know the members of the Progressive Conservative caucus read before they go to bed each night to find out what's going on in the right-wing Republican world that they believe in, certainly indicated that wait times are the lowest in the province of Ontario, verifying that in fact the investments we've made in that sector are reducing wait times in the five key areas that are so important to people throughout the province of Ontario, but particularly in my riding of Peterborough, where they're

seeing the positive impact of having that investment in wait times.

I want my friend from Scarborough to pick up from here.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate? The member from York North.

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): In the few moments I have, I would just like, in support of this opposition day motion, to speak to a couple of issues.

One is the fact that this government has undertaken very, very expensive change without, I believe, due regard for the creation of better service, and I'm talking about the CCACs. It's estimated that the cost is going to be close to \$100 million, and that \$100 million is on issues with regard to the severances of \$50 million, \$14 million in legal costs and \$25 million in wage harmonization. None of that speaks to the issue of providing better service. It seems to me, when you're looking at much larger areas, that you're going to see a reduction in local control.

The other point that I think is important to put on the record is that many of the government speakers this afternoon referred to the deficit in 2003 in a way to suggest that it was a surprise. Well, in fact, they need go no further than their own member Gerry Phillips, who recognized the fact that this was a budget that would require some adjustment. This Liberal government made no effort to meet the kinds of challenges we had faced.

1740

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): I'm delighted to join in this debate on what is something I would describe as a typical opposition day motion. It starts off with a phrase that we all could support. Of course we want to spend money wisely. Then it goes on to name a litany of what Tories would consider to be unnecessary spending that has taken place, all of which, one by one, if I were to have the time to go through them, could be ably refuted, all of which are factually wrong, taken out of context and/or grossly exaggerated.

That being said, I've been in public office now for 12 years. I've worked at all three levels of government and I haven't seen a government anywhere—in fact, I haven't seen an organization, be they profit, non-profit or private sector—that's perfect when it comes to managing spending. I can tell you that we're not claiming to be perfect, but we're very, very vigilant and the Premier is very, very vigilant in doing everything we can to ensure that Ontario residents are getting value for money. That's the key: getting value for money. That's what the hard-working people of Ontario deserve. That's what the hard-working people of Ontario demand. That's what the McGuinty government is delivering to the hard-working people of Ontario.

After eight years, the people of Ontario saw a Tory government that managed over unprecedented labour unrest. From teachers to public servants, nobody was happy. They devastated our public services. There was a lack of long-term vision when it came to infrastructure investment. They just didn't get the fact that you have to

invest long-term to get good economic prosperity and quality of life. The municipalities across this province were punished by downloading year after year. After all of that, what did we get for it? We ended up with a hidden, secretive, \$5.6-billion deficit that our government had to start off with, in the hole. What was that in the name of? Was it in the name of savings that would put the books of the province in good stead? No, it was in the name of tax cuts, something that didn't help the economy, something that didn't contribute to our quality of life.

The McGuinty government is going in the exact opposite direction. We're working with public servants here in this province. We're rebuilding public services from one end of this province to the other, right throughout the entire Ontario government. We're making sure that the people of this province are getting good services and that they're getting value for the money they invest in this government.

We're also taking a long-term vision on infrastructure. We're investing like never before across this province in public transit, roads and bridges, schools, universities and colleges, hospitals and housing, something the previous government never believed in and never thought was important to them. These are things that the Tories neglected in the name of tax cuts. They did this at the expense of our quality of life; they did it at the expense of our economic prosperity.

We're also uploading municipal costs across the province. Whether it be for public transit, whether it be for public health, whether it be land ambulance, whether it be investing in housing across the province, we're uploading. All of these are investments that are being uploaded, not downloaded like the Tories used to do.

After inheriting that Tory \$5.6-billion hidden deficit, we're working our way out of that hole. We're more than halfway there now and we're well on the way to eliminating that Tory deficit. On top of all that, we've managed to invest heavily in the people of this province.

Our health care system is improving, our education system is improving, and we're investing strategically in our economy to ensure that we're protecting and enhancing the ability of our people in this province to find work. We're providing value for money. We're building a strong and vibrant province with a quality of life second to none and an economic prosperity agenda that is absolutely second to none across North America, and we're being recognized across North America for doing that. Behind that, and I suspect it probably doesn't get the publicity it deserves, is the hard work being done by people like the Honourable Gerry Phillips, our Minister of Government Services. He's making provincial government more transparent and accountable.

I don't have a lot of time, but let me give you at least one example; I've got many. Let's look at the birth certificate situation. The Tories and the NDP laughed at us when we said we were going to clean that up. We've put them online—

Mr. Leal: Money-back guarantee.

Mr. Duguid: —and we have a money-back guarantee.

Of 250,000 applications, only 100 missed the 15-day deadline. That's a fraction of the time that under the management of the previous government it was taking, a fraction of the time. That's being creative. That's being innovative. That's delivering good-quality public services at a good, effective cost and getting value for taxpayers' money.

Let me give you another example. Our auditor now has the power to examine the broader public sector. That's going to help us find savings.

Let me give you another example. We've banned partisan government advertising. That doesn't mean we don't communicate to the people of Ontario. It doesn't mean we don't advertise at all, but we've banned partisan public advertising, as we said we would.

Let me give you another example. The auditor must now sign off on the province's books prior to the next general election. Never again in the future of this province will a Tory government be able to get into office—they may not get into office at all ever again, but if they ever do, they'll never again be able to secretly leave us with a deficit the size of \$5.6 billion. Never again will that happen, and let's hope for the future of this province that they never get back into office again because of the mess that they left us with.

Let me give you another example. Instead of spending hundreds of millions of dollars on outside consultants, we're saving \$20 million a year by utilizing the good services, the good skills, the good abilities of our fine public servants here in this province.

We're doing government well. We're improving public service. We're doing government better than they ever did. We're getting better value for money. The people in this province recognize it.

Interjections.

Mr. Duguid: They may not recognize it.

The people of Ontario recognize it, and we're very, very proud of the job we're doing.

The Acting Speaker: The time for debate has now expired.

Mr. Tory has moved opposition day motion number 2. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

There are more than five members standing. Call in the members. There will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1747 to 1757.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour will please stand and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Miller, Norm	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	Munro, Julia	Tory, John
Hudak, Tim	Murdoch, Bill	Yakubuski, John
MacLeod, Lisa	O'Toole, John	
Martiniuk, Gerry	Runciman, Robert W.	

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed, please stand and be recorded.

Nays

Arthurs, Wayne	Dombrowsky, Leona	Mossop, Jennifer F.
Balkissoon, Bas	Duguid, Brad	Oraziotti, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Patten, Richard
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Peters, Steve
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Brotten, Laurel C.	Leal, Jeff	Ramal, Khalil
Brownell, Jim	Levac, Dave	Ramsay, David
Bryant, Michael	Marsales, Judy	Rinaldi, Lou
Cansfield, Donna H.	Matthews, Deborah	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Mauro, Bill	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	McMeekin, Ted	Smith, Monique
Craitor, Kim	McNeely, Phil	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	Meilleur, Madeleine	Watson, Jim
Delaney, Bob	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Mitchell, Carol	Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 13; the nays are 48.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

It now being 6 o'clock, this House stands recessed until 6:45.

The House adjourned at 1800.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. James K. Bartleman
Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. Brown
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma–Manitoulin	Brown, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (L) Speaker / Président	Haliburton–Victoria–Brock	Scott, Laurie (PC)
Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Aldershot	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Barrie–Simcoe–Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Hamilton East / Hamilton-Est	Horwath, Andrea (ND)
Beaches–East York / Beaches–York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Hon. / L'hon. Marie (L) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique
Bramalea–Gore–Malton– Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hamilton West / Hamilton-Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Hastings–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Brampton West–Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest–Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Huron–Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kenora–Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Millroy, John (L)
Chatham–Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, deputy government House leader / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement	Lanark–Carleton	Werling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Leeds–Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Dufferin–Peel– Wellington–Grey	Tory, John (PC) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Durham	O'Toole, John (PC)	London West / London-Ouest	Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Eglington–Lawrence	Colle, Hon. / L'hon. Mike (L) Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration	London–Fanshawe	Ramal, Khalil (L)
Elgin–Middlesex–London	Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga-Centre	Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L) Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Erie–Lincoln Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga East / Mississauga-Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Mississauga West / Mississauga-Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement	Nepean–Carleton	MacLeod, Lisa (PC)
Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Guelph–Wellington	Sandals, Liz (L)	Niagara Falls	Craitor, Kim (L)
Haldimand–Norfolk–Brant	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
		Nipissing	Smith, Monique M. (L)
		Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)	Stormont–Dundas– Charlottenburgh	Brownell, Jim (L)
Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L) Premier and President of the Council, Minister of Research and Innovation / premier ministre et président du Conseil, ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior- Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L) Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé	Timiskaming–Cochrane	Ramsay, Hon. / L'hon. David (L) Minister of Natural Resources, minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs / ministre des Richesses naturelles, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Ottawa–Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Ottawa–Vanier	Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	Toronto Centre–Rosedale / Toronto-Centre–Rosedale	Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L) Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / vice-premier ministre, ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Toronto–Danforth	Tabuns, Peter (ND)
Parkdale–High Park	DiNovo, Cheri (ND)	Trinity–Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Parry Sound–Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Vaughan–King–Aurora	Sorbara, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (L) Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Perth–Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Waterloo–Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Whitby–Ajax	Elliott, Christine (PC)
Pickering–Ajax–Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Prince Edward–Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce, ministre délégué à la Condition féminine
Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Yakabuski, John (PC)	Windsor–St. Clair	Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L) Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Sarnia–Lambton	Di Cocco, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (L) Minister of Culture / ministre de la Culture	York Centre / York-Centre	Kwinter, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Sault Ste. Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	York North / York-Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Scarborough East / Scarborough-Est	Chambers, Hon. / L'hon. Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Children and Youth Services / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse	Burlington	Vacant
Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	Markham	Vacant
Scarborough–Agincourt	Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L) Minister of Government Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Vacant
Scarborough–Rouge River	Balkissoon, Bas (L)		
Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)		
Simcoe–Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St. Catharines	Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (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	Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (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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Wayne Arthurs, Bob Delaney,
Garfield Dunlop, Andrea Horwath,
Tim Hudak, Phil McNeely John Wilkinson,
Jim Wilson, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Finances et affaires économiques**

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Rosario Marchese, John O'Toole,
Shafiq Qadri, Khalil Ramal, Kathleen O.Wynne
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Michael Prue, Monique M. Smith,
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