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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 26 March 2007

Lundi 26 mars 2007

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 26 March 2007

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 26 mars 2007

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Victoria–Brock): I rise today and recognize the Minister of the Environment as the second most recent addition to the Dalton McGuinty promise-breakers' club. As Ontarians know, this club is jam-packed with McGuinty members who refuse to keep their promises.

During the election in 2003, in bright-red, promise-breaking Liberal ink Dalton McGuinty and Minister Broten stated, "The air we breathe is killing us. We will make our air cleaner and close those coal generation plants."

Dalton McGuinty not only broke his misguided promise to close the coal generation plants once, he then broke it a second and third time. In January, the minister completely abandoned her promise of 60% waste diversion, saying that Dalton McGuinty won't succeed in keeping another one of his biggest campaign promises to divert 60% of garbage from landfills by the end of 2008.

Although the minister had already stated that she has a plan for climate change, the environment commissioner's fall report indicated that Dalton McGuinty has no formal plan for climate change. In Dalton McGuinty's budget, the Minister of the Environment was all but ignored. Where was the Minister of the Environment during the budget process?

Let's recognize in advance that Dalton McGuinty is clearly relying on federal dollars to completely fund his responsibility for climate change programs.

Old habits die hard for Dalton McGuinty, and he certainly knows how to surround himself with the same kinds of people. He has ensured that the Minister of the Environment has solidified her place in the Dalton McGuinty promise-breakers' club.

JUICE GRAPE GROWERS

Mr. Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Time is running out for Mike and Eileen Hildenbrandt. You see, they're farmers. They're down in Jordan and they've got 48 acres of juice grapes. Most of the 105 juice grape farmers in the province are located down in Niagara. Most of the 2,000 acres dedicated to juice grapes are

down there in that scarce and valuable vineyard land in Niagara.

Mike Hildenbrandt is the third generation of his family to be farming this same land. You can go down there if you want. It's at 15th Street and Regional Road 81, the original wine route. You see, when Cadbury Schweppes announced the closure of its grape juice processing plant in St. Catharines, we didn't just lose 26 more manufacturing jobs in Dalton McGuinty's Ontario. Those juice grape growers lost the market for their grapes, and there wasn't a penny for them, nothing for them in Dalton McGuinty's budget of last week—nothing. They were ignored. They were treated with disregard and disdain.

This anti-agricultural Ontario government with its anti-agricultural budget has left farmers in the lurch. On behalf of Mike and Eileen Hildenbrandt and hundreds of other good farmers who have been left to hang and dry, those juice grape growers, by Dalton McGuinty's Ontario, I say it's time they had their fair due.

HEALTHY LIVING

Mr. Khalil Ramal (London–Fanshawe): Today, I rise in the House to thank Mr. Watson for coming to London on March 1 and announcing that the McGuinty government is providing the city of London with \$4 million to upgrade the North London Optimist Community Centre as well as the Thames pool. This funding is part of the province's \$190-million economic stimulus plan.

Active life is crucial to good health. I'm certain that by upgrading the facilities, we are helping to encourage the people of London to participate in physical activities and achieve a better quality of life, especially our seniors' groups like Huff n' Puff.

The Minister of Health Promotion and the McGuinty government are investing in community infrastructure in areas such as sport, physical activity and recreation, which all address the government's focus on building a healthier Ontario.

By investing in and promoting healthy living and wellness, we are creating a better quality of life for all Ontarians.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): I rise in the House to point out a shocking pattern of neglect and inaction from the McGuinty government.

Today we heard the Ombudsman's report about the insider winning scandal at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Commission—or is it OLG? This is not the first report of the Ombudsman that shows this government is asleep at the switch. This is a government with no plan.

Shamefully, the Liberals do nothing until the Ombudsman or the Auditor General sounds the alarm bell. Only a month ago, the Ombudsman released his critical report and recommendations on the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. He said the Ontario compensation system for crime victims “is hurting the very people it is supposed to help.” He called it scandalous.

We all recall the report of the Auditor General last year that followed the resignation of the CEO of Hydro One and the \$3-million severance package. Amongst other findings, the report of the Auditor General revealed several CAS executives getting \$50,000 SUVs.

1340

This pattern is simply disturbing. The McGuinty government is not a government that has a plan or shows any sort of leadership. Premier McGuinty does nothing until he is shamed into action. The rest of the time, it is as if their eyes are closed, listening to their own records, with their hand in your pocket at all times.

This government has no plan, and only responds to reports from the Auditor General or, today, the Ombudsman.

EDUCATION

Mr. Phil McNeely (Ottawa–Orléans): When our government was first elected in 2003, we found that students and educators were struggling under the imprudent political decisions of the prior government. Education budgets had been slashed, classes were overcrowded, there were frequent labour disputes, and special education services had drastically reduced. As a result, an alarmingly low number of students were meeting basic standards or graduating.

In contrast to that once-grim picture, this government has improved education in Ontario. We are meeting our commitments, and today the education system is no longer failing our students. We now know that test scores across the province have risen at least 10 percentage points.

In Ottawa, students are showing even greater improvement. For example, grade 3 reading achievement has risen by 13 and 14 percentage points in the French and English school boards respectively. And more than 80% of grade 10 students are reaching or exceeding provincial standards.

The high school graduation rate has also risen from 68% to 73%, which means 20,000 more students are graduating. Class sizes have been drastically reduced to 20 students in 65% of classes. Furthermore, 93% of classes have 23 students or less. Ottawa's public school boards will receive funding for more than 50 new primary teachers to help reduce class sizes further for the 2007-08 year.

It is this hard work by our government that is making a difference in the lives of our students over the last four years, and we will continue to strive for even greater improvements for the future of our children.

RURAL ONTARIO

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke): Municipal officials in eastern Ontario were anxiously awaiting the provincial budget last Thursday. After all, they've been very active in bringing their concerns to the attention of the McGuinty Liberals, both directly and through their MPPs. They truly believed that they'd made a solid case that could not be ignored even by this anti-rural Liberal government.

How disappointed they were when the budget was tabled. There is little or nothing to indicate that the urban-centred McGuinty-ites were ever listening to them. As Doug Struthers, chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus, said, “This budget fails to address major problems that ‘threaten the economic health’ of rural communities in eastern Ontario.”

Where is the eastern Ontario prosperity fund as proposed by Lanark–Carleton MPP Norman Sterling? Where is the eastern Ontario secretariat as proposed by Leeds–Grenville MPP Bob Runciman? Where is the share of the gas tax revenue for rural communities as proposed by myself in my private member's Bill 3? As one member of the wardens' caucus said to me, “At least the federal government recognizes rural people by giving us a fair share of the gas tax that we pay.” It is clear that the Liberals have written off rural Ontario, hitting eastern Ontario especially hard.

If I were a Liberal member in rural Ontario, I'd be very worried that my Premier is prepared to sacrifice my seat to keep his limo. Unlike the Liberals, John Tory and the PC caucus continue to work for the people of eastern Ontario while Dalton McGuinty abandons them. Shame.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): I'm delighted to rise today to highlight just some of the tremendous good news that's contained in the 2007 provincial budget for the good people of the riding of Brant.

As you know, brownfield cleanup has been a particular concern of mine, the city of Brantford and the citizens of Brant, especially the people living near these dangerous sites. I'm very happy to report that a \$5-million allocation has been made to assist in the cleanup of the Mohawk–Greenwich site once and for all, in partnership with the municipality and the federal government. Additionally, another \$2.24-million allocation has been made for an affordable housing project to be completed on a brownfield site.

That's good news, but it doesn't end there, as almost \$700,000 has been allocated to the county of Brant to build a new public library in Burford, Ontario; \$745,000 from the transit trust has been allocated to projects in

Brant; and \$30,000 for improvements to the safety of Highway 24. And \$97,000 has been allocated to centres providing care for children and adults in special-needs situations, such as the Lansdowne treatment centre, Community Living Brant and Brantwood Centre.

These allocations speak to this budget's direction and strength, including a balanced and predictable increase to the minimum wage to over \$10 per hour. This approach is the proper way to address low wages in Ontario.

First, the MRI, then the FHT, then the CHT. These measures represent smart investments in health care, education and now brownfields. In the last year alone, my riding has received \$90 million and as—

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Thank you. The member for Oakville.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn (Oakville): It's a pleasure to rise today and talk about the great riding of Oakville and what our government's done for families to help expand opportunities and turn around the damage and the cuts, the neglect and the deficits of the previous government. With the recent budget announcements, Oakville and Halton region have received those important investments they need that create stronger communities and healthier families.

Some of the key investments for this area include, finally, an end to the GTA social service pooling, saving Halton taxpayers more than \$40 million annually when fully phased out. As well, property tax reform creates a more predictable and fair tax assessment system, saving local businesses over \$7 million in business education tax. There's over \$1.2 million to improve transit, and that's on top of the \$2.2 million we've already invested.

While some members opposite want to take Ontario backwards by cutting over \$2.5 billion from our health care system and want to take necessary funding from public education and put it into private schools, we know that Ontarians are choosing our way. We know there's always more to do, but the McGuinty Liberals are working hard for the people of this province and those in my riding of Oakville, and are committed to progress and the creation of new opportunities for all people in this province.

Mr. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): The latest budget from the McGuinty Liberals is doing great things to help expand opportunities for all Ontarians. Through investing in what counts, like our children, our health care, our education system and our environment, we recognize the need to continue laying the building blocks for a vibrant and sustainable future. Through providing an additional \$2.1 billion to help children and families, the new Ontario child benefit will aid close to 1.3 million children per year when fully implemented. Experts in the field have been quick to send positive feedback.

Gail Nyberg, executive director of the Daily Bread Food Bank, had this to say about the latest Ontario budget: "It's been a long time since poverty reduction measures were at the forefront of a provincial budget in Ontario. We congratulate the Ontario government for having the courage to take on this significant issue, and

we expect to see a reduction in food bank use in the coming years as a result."

The McGuinty Liberals have brought in \$125 million in immediate environmental initiatives, which include rebates for home energy audits and funding to help plant trees through the Trees Ontario Foundation. In the area of health, we're providing more money to strengthen our public health care system and bring down wait times. In education, we're working hard for students and children through increasing funding for necessary resources to schools across the province.

As the title from an article in the Toronto Star today notes, "Tory Offers Little New as Election Approaches." This has become typical of the Leader of the Opposition. We can't go back and we will not go back.

VISITORS

Mr. Dave Levac (Brant): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: A unique situation occurred today in terms of meeting with my constituents. I have in the gallery right now Karen and David Anderson and their daughter, Bailey, who have joined us because they've supported a charity and bought a lunch with Dave. Boy, I don't know why anyone would want to do that but, quite frankly, they came here to learn the workings of the House, and I invited them for the first time. They're very strong members in my riding. I welcome them here today and thank them for being here to learn about democracy.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to take this opportunity to welcome one of my constituents and the candidate for the PC Party for the next election, Cathy Galt.

1350

REPORT, OMBUDSMAN

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a report of the Ombudsman concerning the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.

VISITING CLERK

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Members, please join me in welcoming Gail Bennett, table officer from the Northwest Territories, who is on attachment with our table this week. Welcome.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Pursuant to standing order 62(c), the supplementary estimates 2006-07 before the committee of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Health

Promotion, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, the Ministry of Research and Innovation, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and the Ministry of Transportation are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Pursuant to standing order 61(c), the reported supplementary estimates 2006-07 of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the Ministry of Research and Innovation, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Ministry of Transportation, not selected for consideration, are deemed to be concurred in.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SUPPLY ACT, 2007

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2007

Mr. Sorbara moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 188, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007 / Projet de loi 188, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2007.

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

Does the minister wish to make a brief statement?

Interjection.

The Speaker: Introduction of bills? The member for Scarborough Centre.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE MEMORIAL DAY ACT, 2007

LOI DE 2007 SUR LE JOUR COMMÉMORATIF DU GÉNOCIDE ARMÉNIEN

Mr. Duguid moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 189, An Act to proclaim April 24 Armenian Genocide Memorial Day / Projet de loi 189, Loi proclamant le 24 avril Jour commémoratif du génocide arménien.

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. Brad Duguid (Scarborough Centre): This bill is similar to a motion passed in the Quebec legislative assembly in 2003. What it does is designate April 24 of each year as Armenian Genocide Memorial Day.

It's essential that we remember and learn from the atrocities that have taken place throughout human history in order to ensure that such crimes against humanity are not perpetrated in the future. If healing of the wounds caused by the Armenian genocide of 1915 is to occur,

recognition of what happened must first be acknowledged. This bill recognizes the Armenian genocide and provides a day to reflect on this crime against humanity in hopes that through recognition, peace, harmony and understanding will eventually be able to prevail.

Joining us in the gallery today in support of this bill are a number of people from the Armenian community, including genocide survivors. I'd like to introduce a few of them now, if I may: the Armenian Community Centre of Toronto and all the organizations that operate under this centre; the Armenian National Committee of Toronto and Canada; the Armenian Students' Association of Ontario; students of the ARS high school, principal, teaching staff and board members; St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church; St. Gregory's Armenian Catholic Church; Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church of Toronto, the Armenian Evangelical Church; the Armenian General Benevolent Union, the Zoryan Institute, the Canadian Armenian Business Council, and, most especially, I would like to introduce genocide survivor Mr. Diran Terzian and Robert Adourian, son of Paul Adourian, who was a member of the Georgetown Boys.

VISITORS

Mr. Tim Peterson (Mississauga South): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I rise to acknowledge the great contribution that the Legions of Ontario have made, and especially the Legion in Port Credit. A lot of people know the great work they do in veterans' affairs on Remembrance Day, but don't know that they also run literacy and poster contests. Today we have two members who ran this contest in Port Credit and brought six of the winners down with them. I would like to acknowledge Russ and Faye Bradshaw, the people from the Legion, and with them are Oliver Barquin, Eric Zheng, Nicholas Koschate, Andreas Mantas, Christina Muia and Daniel Broadus.

MOTIONS

REFERRAL OF BILLS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding three private members' bills.

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

Hon. Mr. Bradley: I move:

That the March 30, 2006, order of the House referring Bill 67, An Act to amend various Acts to require a declaration with respect to the donation of organs and tissue on death, to the standing committee on social policy be discharged and that the bill be referred instead to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly;

That the December 7, 2006, order of the House referring Bill 161, An Act respecting employment agencies, to the standing committee on general government be discharged and the bill be referred instead to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly;

That the November 30, 2006, order of the House referring Bill 164, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002, the Environmental Protection Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act to the standing committee on regulations and private bills be discharged and the bill be referred instead to the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly; and

That, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, the standing committee on the Legislative Assembly be authorized to meet from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Thursday mornings to consider Bill 67, An Act to amend various Acts to require a declaration with respect to the donation of organs and tissue on death; Bill 161, An Act respecting employment agencies; and Bill 164, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 2002, the Environmental Protection Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

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

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): I move that pursuant to standing order 9(c)(i), the House shall meet from 6:45 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Monday, March 26, 2007, Tuesday, March 27, 2007, and Wednesday, March 28, 2007, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Mr. Bradley has moved government notice of motion number 288. 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 1401 to 1406.

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

Ayes

Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Peters, Steve
Bentley, Christopher	Fonseca, Peter	Peterson, Tim
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bountrogianni, Marie	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Racco, Mario G.
Brotten, Laurel C.	Kular, Kuldeep	Ramal, Khalil
Bryant, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Ramsay, David
Caplan, David	Levac, Dave	Rinaldi, Lou
Chan, Michael	Marsales, Judy	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Smith, Monique
Crozier, Bruce	Mauro, Bill	Smitherman, George
Delaney, Bob	McMeekin, Ted	Sorbara, Gregory S.
Dhillon, Vic	McNeely, Phil	Takhar, Harinder S.
Di Cocco, Caroline	Meilleur, Madeleine	Van Bommel, Maria
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mossop, Jennifer F.	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	Parsons, Ernie	Zimmer, David
Duncan, Dwight	Patten, Richard	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Kormos, Peter	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	MacLeod, Lisa	Prue, Michael
DiNovo, Cheri	Marchese, Rosario	Savoline, Joyce
Dunlop, Garfield	Martel, Shelley	Tascona, Joseph N.
Ferreira, Paul	Martiniuk, Gerry	Tory, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Witmer, Elizabeth
Horwath, Andrea	Munro, Julia	Yakubski, John
Hudak, Tim	Murdoch, Bill	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 50; the nays are 23.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

1410

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

RENDEMENT SCOLAIRE

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne (Minister of Education): I rise in the House today to announce that in total, 12,000 additional students have graduated from high school over the past two years. This is thanks to a five percentage point rise in the graduation rate during those two years, and we expect even more students will be wearing cap and gown when the current school year finishes. This is great news for the province of Ontario and a clear sign that our partnerships with parents, teachers, employers and others are making a difference in the lives of students.

We have a shared vision—more graduates with a lifetime of opportunities—and we agree that allowing students to slip between the cracks is simply no longer acceptable. That's why our government launched the student success strategy over three years ago with the advice and support of our partners. This is a strategy focused on reaching every student. We're doing that with more high-quality learning choices and one-on-one attention from teachers. We're so confident in this strategy that we expect a graduation rate of 85% by 2010-11. This is a significant boost from 68% in 2003-04 and it means, most importantly, that 20,000 additional students will graduate every year once the target has been achieved. I'm proud to repeat that the rate over the past two years has already climbed five percentage points, to 73%.

This increase directly relates to the positive changes we've made in the high school experience. We've funded 1,600 additional high school teachers since 2004, et nous en finançons 320 de plus l'année prochaine. We're going to fund 320 more next year.

We want more teachers in our schools because we respect their dedication to teaching every student, every day. Most of the new teachers are part of student success

teams. These teams are in every high school, keeping students focused on graduation. For example, their work includes new credit recovery programs. These programs allow students to return to a course they failed and complete the required units for credit. Students also have more learning choices to customize their education to their individual skills and ambitions for the future. As part of the high schools major initiative, they are now majoring in construction, hospitality, tourism, agriculture, manufacturing, primary industries, and arts and culture. Our students have greater access to co-operative education and can count co-op courses for up to two of their mandatory credits.

What all of this means is that more students can gain valuable hands-on skills and knowledge in the workplace, and there are thousands of success stories already that demonstrate our plan is working.

Catarina Robalo is just one of them. She's a grade 12 student at St. Edmund Campion Secondary School in Mississauga. She used to hate school and skipped often. Now she's back on track to graduate because of the help of the student success team. The team helped her finish the classes she had failed and refocus on her education. Now she is excited about graduation and applying for college to become a dental hygienist. A rising graduation rate and stories like Catarina's are clear indications that we're headed in the right direction.

Notre gouvernement est déterminé à faire du système d'éducation public de l'Ontario le meilleur au monde, and we are doing that by listening to students and respecting them as individuals. We're also partnering with teachers and other educators to ensure all new learning choices are high-quality and relevant. I'm certain that public confidence in education will continue to rise, because I believe there is a consensus in Ontario that young people should have opportunities. Our investments and partnerships are helping more students reach their full potential. L'Ontario prospérera à l'avenir parce que nous travaillons ensemble aujourd'hui pour aider les élèves à réussir.

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

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer (Kitchener–Waterloo): I would like to respond to this particular announcement. I would say to the minister that the people in Durham are not too happy about your supposed partnership. Certainly, it's causing a lot of chaos for the students in that community.

But I also think the minister needs to take an honest look at what's been happening in the province. Statistics Canada recently reported that between 1993 and 2003, the provincial dropout rate fell by 5.6%, or 40,000 students. I think it's important that in this House we acknowledge that a trend has been underway. The NDP, the Conservatives and now the Liberals have all been committed to ensuring that our students in our schools achieve success. I think it's important that that happen. Indeed, some of the results we're seeing today are because of the literacy and numeracy tests that we put in place and also the program of students at risk. This

enabled us to identify student problems early and work to resolve them and help students achieve success.

However, the minister also needs to take a hard look at what she hasn't done, and there are many things. Last week my colleague the member for Oak Ridges inducted her into the Dalton McGuinty promise-breakers' club.

Interjection: Charter member.

Mrs. Witmer: I think she's one of the charter members. One of the things is, this government is not keeping our students safe. We are seeing increasingly dangerous levels of supervision.

That is being said not by us but by Blair Hilts, the president of the Ontario Principals' Council, who wrote recently, "There has been a reduction in supervision at both the elementary and secondary levels, creating a supervision gap that has not been adequately filled. That gap has negatively impacted student safety and the learning environment in our schools."

Furthermore, this minister has not fixed the funding formula that was recommended by Dr. Rozanski when we have known about it for three years and you had the opportunity to do so. Instead, we've seen the slashing of programs, the firing of support staff and instability throughout dozens of school boards. We are seeing no results from Dalton McGuinty whatsoever on the funding formula.

Furthermore, Dalton McGuinty has failed newcomers and those with special needs. You have forced boards to raid those funds that are being provided in order to balance their budgets. Also, you have broken almost every education promise that you have made. Recently, you were forced to retreat, to back down, from your hard class size cap because we were seeing, number one, an increasing number of portables at our schools, plus we were seeing up to three grades in one class.

So in the face of growing class size and growing number of portables, the Dalton McGuinty government had to retreat from a key plank in your election platform of 2003. How can anybody believe anything that Dalton McGuinty says? How can anyone trust him?

Furthermore, we take a look at your moratorium. You have failed to honour and keep your promise on your own moratorium on school closures. You have closed 150 schools. You have let the people in this province down.

Furthermore, you have failed to meet your own deadline on standardized tests, and now you're moving it into the next decade. You're extending the deadline indefinitely. People in this province are very disappointed. They can't believe anything that you say; any promises that you've made, you've broken them. Dalton McGuinty is not to be trusted. When it comes to education, this province has been let down by this minister and we have been slipping under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty. Unfortunately, at the end of the day, whether it's safety in our schools or whether it's slashing newcomer and special education budgets, you are putting more and more of our students at risk each and every day.

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): I want to say to the Minister of Education that we do not share

your enthusiasm with graduation rates. We would if we thought for one minute they were indicative of higher success rates in our schools. Unfortunately, like the education quality assessment office results, the government is more concerned with generating a politically useful number than with ensuring the real achievement and future success of students. In order to pad the numbers, secondary teachers have been put under extraordinary pressure to pass students.

According to the OSSTF Education Forum magazine, teachers are feeling pressure to “adjust failing marks.” From the same article, teachers are concerned about a system which “allows late assignments to go unpenalized, plagiarized essays to be rewritten, absolute guidelines to be repeatedly extended, unsubmitted work to be accepted after the semester is over, and obvious failures to be overturned.” I know you smile at that, Minister, because you’re very well familiar with this stuff.

1420

Teachers report that the student success teachers that the government is so proud of in many cases spend more time trying to negotiate a change in the grade than they do working with students to legitimately improve the grade. Just last week, in fact, I met a secondary school teacher who’s thinking of quitting because he’s tired of being told by the principal when he should regrade his students and give them a passing grade.

The credit recovery process is described by many as a token rubber stamp program where enrolment virtually guarantees a credit.

Rather than create real programming, the government has come up with Bill 52, which effectively contracts out the education of the most needy children in the province to guarantee their graduation, without any concern for their real education. I say that Bill 52 virtually guarantees that the programs that will be taught will be taught by non-teachers. In fact, any Tom, Dick, Harry and/or Mary can run such a program.

Under Bill 52, the minister will have to sign off on every program until the election. After the election, the minister doesn’t have to do that any more. And you wonder why people become cynical.

These phony numbers announcements will not take the place of real alternative programs, adequate special education services and more supports in the classroom. Educational assistants, custodians, secretaries and technical staff are working harder and longer to try to provide quality of education. School boards are raiding capital funds. They’re putting off much-needed school maintenance. They’re selling chocolate bars and holding skip-a-thons to support their schools. Parents are waiting, as I am, for you to stop making announcements and give Ontario school boards the resources they need to actually deliver excellence in education. Hundreds of striking support workers from the Durham public school board came all the way to Queen’s Park to let you know that you haven’t solved the problems in our schools.

We say, Minister, that you must fix the failed education funding formula so that our hard-working support

workers and teachers have the tools they need to make education in Ontario work. Don’t waste your time and ours with these announcements. Frankly, we expected better from this government. We are giving you—I am giving you—a failing grade, Minister, and so are the people of Ontario, and there won’t be any success teachers to change your grade.

VISITORS

Mr. John Yakabuski (Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke):

On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I’d like to draw the members’ attention to the members’ gallery west, where we have in attendance Mohamed Kassim, Monte McNaughton, Chris Savard, Rick Byers and Cathy Galt, who are all recently nominated candidates on behalf of the PC Party. I’m sure that I speak for members on both sides of this House when I say welcome to Queen’s Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal and the minister responsible for the lottery corporation. This morning, the Ombudsman called the minister’s bluff. He released his report on the growing lottery scandal that has engulfed the McGuinty government. This is a scandal that first came to light last October with reports of so-called lottery insiders winning at a greater rate than statistically they should. The Ombudsman suggests that these problems have mushroomed on Dalton McGuinty’s watch.

The minister claimed this afternoon that he didn’t know about any insider wins until 10 days before the CBC ran its report last fall.

My question to the minister is this: Why didn’t you know about this any sooner? Did anybody in your office or any of your officials know anything about this before the 10-day period prior to the television broadcast, and, if so, exactly when did they know and what did they know? When did they know anything and what did they know about these details before you yourself said you knew?

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): First of all, I want to commend the Ombudsman for the work that he’s done. I believe it’s a fair and balanced report.

This government and all members of this government, myself included, believe the public trust is paramount. That’s why we took very specific action when these allegations, serious as they are, were brought to light. That’s why I wrote Mr. Gough, the board chair. He brought in KPMG. The Ombudsman, in fact, has recommended that all of KPMG’s recommendations be implemented.

But it didn't just end there. The member for York North chaired an all-party legislative committee to provide oversight of Ontario Lottery and Gaming, and that committee commended many of the efforts that were made to date.

This government has always treated these matters with the seriousness that they were brought to light. I would quote the Ombudsman, who says in his report on page 69, "I am happy to see that both the government and OLG appear to be headed in the right direction."

Mr. Tory: Of course, what he's pointing out is that they appear to be headed in the right direction, and after he caught them. The point is, when the minister talks about the public trust, it only becomes paramount with Dalton McGuinty and company when they get caught, and that's when they start to do anything whatsoever.

The answer that you gave is very disconcerting because it goes to the very heart of ministerial responsibility. This is a \$6-billion-a-year corporation that thousands and millions of Ontarians do business with every day. You appoint the board of directors and that board of directors reports to you—not to anybody else, not to the Ombudsman, not to the CBC. They report to you.

For the minister not to know until 10 days before a CBC report what is going on in this multibillion dollar corporation owned by the public and for which he is responsible is a disgrace, and it's why Ontario taxpayers have a very serious concern about this.

My question for Dalton McGuinty's minister is this: Who within your office knew about these insider wins, when did they know, and why didn't the McGuinty government act sooner, before it was exposed by the CBC and by the Ombudsman? Why didn't you do anything about this sooner and act in the public interest?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I don't agree with the characterization of the Leader of the Opposition. In fact, the Fifth Estate broadcast their program making the allegations, and even the Ombudsman says in this report that statistics like those produced on the program are not kept. He does recommend that they do be kept. In fact, we have embraced all of the recommendations of the Ombudsman and will follow through and make sure they are implemented.

That information was never kept when the member's party was in government nor when the third party was in government, and the leader of the official opposition full well knows that.

I would quote the Ombudsman's report yet again. On page 68 he says, "I commend the minister and the government for its openness and responsiveness to my report and recommendations and for their immediate and resolute commitment to ensuring change."

No one in this House or in this province should doubt our sincere desire to implement these changes and restore the public trust.

Mr. Tory: The Ombudsman is commenting on the fact that you acted after you got caught. It's the Dalton McGuinty way: Stick your head in the sand, pretend you don't hear anything and hope you don't get caught. That

is the Dalton McGuinty way. It's applied to so many things, now including the Ontario lottery corporation, and it's when you're not paying attention to things like people spending \$6 million of the taxpayers' money to change the logo of the lottery corporation. That's what happens when you're asleep at the switch.

Even now, you're standing up in your place and pretending the problem is solved. Mr. Brown has walked the plank and we should all just go back to sleep, led by Dalton McGuinty, who was asleep through most of this to begin with.

Why is the minister stonewalling? Why won't you get up and indicate that you know that beyond the reaction to this report, which is the tip of the iceberg, there is much more to be done, that a full and complete investigation is necessary to get to the bottom of everything so that we can make sure the taxpayers who buy the tickets know that this place is properly run and that the games are run with integrity? Why won't you ask for that investigation?

1430

Hon. Mr. Caplan: The leader of the official opposition should listen to the answer before he reads the prepared question.

We've had the standing committee on government agencies, chaired by a member of your caucus, sir; we've had an independent officer of this Legislature; we've had one of Canada's leading audit firms review this matter. In fact, I believe they're the auditor for your company previously and for your party.

If the member wants answers to questions of what happened in 2001, when Mr. Edmonds was in fact so disrespectfully treated, I suggest he turn to his left and ask the minister at the time, the member from Erie-Lincoln, Mr. Hudak, "Come forward. What did you know? When did you know it? Why did you take those actions at that time?"

This government has taken immediate action, and the Ombudsman in fact has verified it. He commends myself and the government for our openness and our responsiveness to the report and to the recommendations. All Ontarians should be confident the Ombudsman's—

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

Mr. Tory: My question again is to the Minister of Infrastructure Renewal. Again, he's on the same approach today. They got caught and now they're saying, "Don't worry. We fixed it all," but in fact they stayed with their head in the sand for months and months and months.

Now, the last time that your government found itself mired in yet another scandal, a few months ago, there were questions never answered satisfactorily to this day about whether or not the head of Hydro One quit or was fired.

We do know this. We do know that the Dalton McGuinty government became the first in history, when they claimed someone quit, nonetheless to pay him five million bucks of taxpayers' money on the way out the

door—this \$5-million handout to a guy who supposedly quit his job. It's an unheard-of concept.

Now today, the lottery corporation announced that Duncan Brown is going to be vacationing with Tom Parkinson at the taxpayers' expense because he's getting paid more than \$700,000 of taxpayers' money for his trouble. The question is, did Duncan Brown quit or was he fired? Will the minister get up and tell us, did he quit or was he fired?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: Board chair Michael Gough was very clear in the media conference earlier today that Mr. Brown and the board reached a mutual consensus that a separation was what was appropriate at the time, and I concur.

Mr. Tory: You know, that sort of non-answer is an insult to the taxpayers of this province because what they know for sure is, notwithstanding that rubbish about a mutual agreement or whatever it was he said, they're on the hook for \$700,000 of their money.

Now, the failure to provide a straightforward answer means that all of your talk about transparency and openness is nothing more than empty words. But worse than that, we're beginning to see a disturbing trend. The government said that Tom Parkinson quit as the head of Hydro One, and yet when he quit his job, you paid him \$5 million. Now we're saying Duncan Brown reached some accommodation with somebody and you paid him more than \$700,000, apparently in hush money. What does this say to the people of Ontario, who place their trust in you to manage their money and to oversee the lottery corporation, that time and time again we see people leaving under questionable circumstances and you pay them huge sums of public money in order to do that? If he quit, as you suggest he might have, why did he get a \$700,000-plus golden handshake from you on the way out—

The Speaker: The question has been asked. Minister?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: Again, I would remind the leader of the official opposition, he might want to listen to the answer before he continues with his prepared written question and his manufactured rage.

The answer is quite clearly this: There was a contract in place between Mr. Brown and the Ontario lottery corporation board. That contract was adhered to. The two parties came to an agreement about how the separation should take place. It was at their own doing.

The public of Ontario should know that I very much believe that we have a contract with the people of Ontario to make sure that the confidence and trust in this organization is in place and the necessary steps will be taken to make sure that the public interest is paramount. The Ombudsman's recommendations will be implemented, as will the KPMG recommendations. This member or any other member should have full confidence that public trust and confidence will be restored in this organization.

Mr. Tory: The minister still has not answered the question as to whether Mr. Brown quit or was fired. He still hasn't answered question. He has made reference to

a contract, and he should bring that contract to this House and table it here today, if not tomorrow for sure.

My question to the minister is this: If you're so concerned about public confidence in the lottery corporation and your government, why would this happen, as is reported, on Wednesday night? In any other public corporation of this size, if there was some agreement reached that the chief executive officer would leave, it would have been made public at the latest the next day. It's a material change, and yet your government chose to cover this up, trying to wait until this morning to indicate that the CEO had left the company. You have done something here that is going to cost the taxpayers—the one thing you haven't disputed is, whatever it is you call it, and I suspect you're going to say that he quit in the end—\$700,000-plus of their money.

Why won't you come clean on whether he was fired or he quit? Why won't you come clean with his contract and table it in the House so we can all see? If he did quit, why are you paying him \$700,000?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I couldn't be any more clear to the leader of the official opposition. In fact, Mr. Brown and the board came to their mutual agreement on Friday. Shortly after that, the first phone call was to the Ombudsman to let him know what had happened. Right after that, a press release was issued by the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. So, quite contrary to what the member opposite, in his fake indignation and mock rage—quite clearly, the appropriate actions have been taken to let the public know what is happening when it's known at that time.

The Speaker: New question. The leader of the third party.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): I have a question for the minister in charge of the Ontario lottery corporation.

Minister, you became minister, as I understand it, in June 2005. Just before that, a judge of the Ontario Court ruled that the lottery corporation knew that retailers might steal from the lottery corporation and from other innocent people and, therefore, the lottery corporation had a responsibility to lottery players like Bob Edmonds.

In my experience here, you would have been briefed on that. Are you telling the people of Ontario today that when you became minister in charge of the lottery corporation, nobody talked about these unfortunate goings-on at the lottery corporation? Nobody briefed you on some of the recent history at the Ontario lottery corporation and some of the problems that had arisen?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: In fact, the Bob Edmonds case began in 2001, as I had indicated earlier. Mr. Hudak, the member from Erie–Lincoln, was the minister at the time. If you have any questions, turn two seats to your right and ask Mr. Hudak what actions he took at the time.

As I indicated, the Fifth Estate engaged in an investigation. It was broadcast in October 2006. This government—myself and the chair of the board—took swift and decisive action to make sure that there would be full co-operation. KPMG was called in. A legislative officer in

the Ombudsman's office took a look at this corporation and has made important recommendations in order that the public trust and confidence in this public corporation would be well maintained.

That's what I'm doing and that's what the Ombudsman has called for, and that's why he says in his report that he commends the minister and the government for its openness and responsiveness to the report and to the recommendations.

Mr. Hampton: I'm talking about the situation that prevailed when and as you became minister. Not only did the Ontario lottery corporation lose a court case with respect to Mr. Edmonds, but the Ontario lottery corporation, on March 17, 2005, just before you became minister, had to make a significant out-of-court settlement, a financial payment to Mr. Edmonds because it had wronged him. Are you saying that when you became minister, nobody briefed you about that? None of the officials of the ministry, none of the officials from the lottery corporation, came in and brought you up to speed as to what was happening, the out-of-court settlement and the loss of a court case? Are you saying that no one briefed you, that you remained completely asleep and in the dark?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: Mr. Edmonds was treated disrespectfully and not in the way that I think a crown corporation should, as I have said here in this House. I've apologized to Mr. Edmonds. I've expressed my regret. The chair of the board of Ontario Lottery and Gaming had Duncan Brown, the former CEO, call and contact Mr. Edmonds directly and apologize for the treatment which had begun, unfortunately, at a previous time.

1440

The Ombudsman has said that this corporation is clearly conflicted and needs to split off the sales and marketing and the oversight provision. We've accepted that recommendation from the Ombudsman. I've contacted my colleague the Minister of Government Services, who met with the Ombudsman as early as Friday, to begin the steps forward in order to make sure that the proper oversight—that the conflict when the corporation was originally struck under the NDP is resolved and—

The Speaker: Thank you. Final supplementary?

Mr. Hampton: I hear a lot of blah blah blah, but no answer to the question. Look, you became the minister of a corporation that does \$6 billion in business, a corporation that goes out there to ordinary Ontarians and says, "Buy our product. You can trust us." There were already situations in the media, in the courts, where it was clear that there was insider fraud taking place. My question has been, were you briefed?

I'm going to ask you another question. The media was also interested. The Toronto Star disclosed the summer after you became minister that the lottery corporation had spent almost half a million dollars trying to silence Mr. Edmonds. Were you briefed about that? Were you informed about those situations, or were you happy to remain asleep and in the dark?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: The Ombudsman did quite a thorough review. All of the history indicated that there were significant problems with the lottery corporation. He highlights 1999 and 2001 as years where there were significant problems. I truly believe it was because the corporation, in the Ombudsman's words, had this apparent conflict within it because it was set up poorly by the New Democrats when they originally set up the corporation.

The Ombudsman's recommendations are divided into two main categories: operational and oversight and regulatory changes. I can tell this member that 17 of the 60 recommendations have already been implemented and 25 will be implemented by the end of June. Work has begun on the remaining 18, and they will be implemented as quickly as possible. That is incredible speed and determination and seriousness from this minister, from this government, on behalf of the people—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question?

Mr. Hampton: To the same minister. Here's the situation: The OLG loses a court case to Mr. Edmonds. It is covered in the media just before you become minister. The Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. is forced to compensate him to the tune of \$200,000. That is in the media. Then the Toronto Star discloses in the summer of 2005, after you become minister, that the OLG has spent almost half a million dollars trying to silence Mr. Edmonds.

My question again is, were you briefed on any of these things? Were you told about these things when you became minister, or were you happy, as many McGuinty ministers are, to remain asleep and in the dark, saying, "I hear nothing, I see nothing and I know nothing"?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: The member, unfortunately, does a disservice to this House. His comments are not factual. I know that the member would want to acknowledge, as the Ombudsman has, that this government has treated this matter with the seriousness in which it has been brought up and has taken decisive action in order to implement the plan.

But I can go further than that. The Ombudsman made some comments earlier today at his morning press conference, and in light of those comments, I have directed Ontario Lottery and Gaming to turn over all of the files reviewed by the Ombudsman and any other relevant files to the OPP for review. We will today be asking the OPP to review the matter raised by the Ombudsman, and it is they who will determine whatever necessary steps should be taken.

Mr. Hampton: Shortly after you became minister, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. tried to use a gag order to stop Mr. Edmonds from going to the media. This is pretty serious—a government agency taking a 78-year-old man who has been the subject of fraud by that government agency, who has been fought by that government agency back and forth through the courts—and now they're going to try to silence him. Would they have come to you, Minister? Would either ministerial staff or OLG officials have come to you and talked to you about a government agency trying to silence a 78-year-old man

who had been the subject of fraud? Are you saying you weren't briefed on that, you weren't told about that either, Minister?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I just want to say quite clearly, I have spoken to this matter. I have apologized to Mr. Edmonds. I can't comment on what former minister Hudak directed his officials to do, why the treatment of Mr. Edmonds was the way that it was. I certainly regret that and I think all members of this House would agree that Mr. Edmonds was treated disrespectfully and improperly. I think all members of this House would want to know that action was taken to make sure that this kind of problem, that this kind of treatment of an Ontario citizen, did not happen again. I would think all members of this House would want the Ombudsman's review and his recommendations to be embraced so it did not happen to another member of the Ontario public.

Speaker, I can assure you and all members of this House and all citizens of Ontario that this government is taking quick and decisive action to implement the recommendations of the Ombudsman to ensure that the public trust and confidence is in place.

Mr. Hampton: Innocent Ontarians have been ripped off to the tune of millions of dollars while this minister sat in his chair and pretended to be asleep. Hospitals and charities have been taken to the cleaners while this minister sat in his chair and didn't have the common sense to ask even routine questions. Tell me, Minister, is that what you think the definition of a cabinet minister is: You collect the salary, you ride in the limousine, but you don't ask any questions?

With all of this happening—with the court decision, with the financial payout, with almost half a million dollars being spent trying to fight Mr. Edmonds, with this same agency trying to silence him—did you ever at any point as a cabinet minister ask, "What's going on here? Is there a problem here?" Did you ever ask any questions whatsoever, Minister?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I think the Ombudsman, an impartial officer of this Legislature, has spoken quite clearly when he says, "I commend the minister and government for its openness and responsiveness," and where he says, "I'm happy to see that both the government and the OLG appear to be headed in the right direction."

Work on the front of implementing the Ombudsman's recommendations has already begun. Some 8,800 self-checking devices have been made available and will be fully rolled out by the end of June. We've lowered the threshold on the "insider win" policy to \$50,000 from \$100,000. We've escalated all insider wins to corporate service and surveillance. We've brought in the Ombudsman to help us in the design of the proper regulatory oversight.

This government has taken appropriate and decisive action to make sure that the public trust and confidence is maintained. I certainly regret that past governments were afraid to take these kinds of steps, but the people of Ontario should have and do have full confidence that appropriate action is being taken.

The Speaker: New question.

Mr. Tory: A question for the minister for the lottery corporation. "Bold action when caught": That's one of the mottos of the McGuinty government—bold action when completely exposed by the CBC, the Toronto Star, Mr. Edmonds' lawyers and anybody else. Don't ever act on your own.

I only want to correct one thing that the leader of the New Democratic Party said. He suggested that the minister was sitting in his chair pretending to be asleep. The minister was in his chair and he was asleep, doing nothing, absolutely nothing. The minister didn't bother to ask. He sold out the people who buy the tickets day in and day out in this province. He sold them out. He abdicated his responsibility for a \$6-billion corporation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, so we can try to get to the bottom of this instead of all this wind that we're having from the other side, I ask the minister a simple question. Will you table all of the memos, all of the briefing notes and all of the correspondence between yourself and your office and the lottery corporation concerning the matters in dispute here so that we can all see what you knew, when you knew it, and what you did about it? We know the answer to the last question is "nothing," but would you table this material so we can all see?

1450

Hon. Mr. Caplan: For all the fake outrage and indignation from the member opposite—a member of his own caucus chairs an all-party legislative committee to look into Ontario Lottery and Gaming. We have an independent officer of the Legislature, Mr. Marin, who prepares a well-balanced and thorough review of the OLG that is fully embraced by the government. One of the leading accounting firms in this country, KPMG, is brought on.

I have a question for Mr. Tory. He has said quite clearly that all retailers and clerks should be banned, absolutely banned—

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): Banned? No.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: Oh, yes, he has, Mr. Dunlop. He has said that they should be banned from buying tickets.

The Ombudsman takes a look at this in the report. He calls that practice unfair and discriminatory. The only jurisdiction in the world that he could find that does this is Argentina. So Mr. Juan Perón Tory can explain why he's taking us down the road of Argentina when we have real leadership here in this House committed to the all-party legislative committee.

Mr. Tory: The minister asks if I'm outraged with respect to the fact that he and Dalton McGuinty have left the ticket-buying public, the customers of the lottery corporation, twisting in the wind while they waited around to get caught, which they did. You're darn right I'm outraged about that, and so are the people of Ontario. If the minister wants to know if I'm outraged about the fact that they have now yet again handed out \$700,000 of the taxpayers' money to supposedly have some guy quit or whatever it is he says has happened here, you're darn

right that I'm outraged about that, and so are the people of Ontario.

The question is about you and your accountability for this: Will you bring in here all of the documents, all of the memos, all of the letters between the lottery corporation and your office? Will you bring Mr. Brown's contract in here so we can all see, because if not, why are you hiding it? Why are you covering it up? Bring it in here. Table it tomorrow so we can all see. Otherwise, you're just trying to cover up for your own pathetic inaction.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: Juan, you're on thin ice with the fake outrage; no one's buying it. The Ombudsman conducted a thorough review. The Ombudsman looked at all of the documents that he felt were appropriate, and I don't think that any member of this Legislature should second-guess the Ombudsman, an independent officer of this Legislature.

I accept the Ombudsman's report. Action to implement that report and the recommendations has been taken: 17 of the 60, and 25 more by the end of June, and the remaining 18 are in progress. The Ombudsman himself has commented and commended the government for the action that has taken place. Everybody understands, of course, the partisan nature of this Legislature, but I'll take the Ombudsman's word over Juan Perón Tory any day of the week.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Michael A. Brown): Stop the clock just for a moment.

I would like to bring the attention of the House to our guest in the Speaker's gallery: Gilles Morin, the member for Carleton East in the 33rd, 34th, 35th and 36th Parliaments and the Deputy Speaker here in the 35th Parliament and part of the 36th. Welcome, Monsieur Morin.

New question.

ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): My question is again to the minister responsible for the Ontario lottery corporation. Minister, in the summer of 2006, on your watch, the Ontario lottery corporation spent over \$200,000 in court trying to silence Mr. Edmonds, trying to stop him from talking to the people of Ontario about how badly the corporation had treated him and about how he'd been defrauded out of money.

Minister, are you saying that the lottery corporation went ahead and engaged in that \$200,000 project of silencing Mr. Edmonds, a 78-year-old man who'd been defrauded, without informing you? Are you saying that you were sleeping through that and in the dark on that as well?

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): I can tell you, I've answered this question already. When

this matter was brought to the attention of the Ontario public by the Fifth Estate, the appropriate action was taken by the board and by myself. I have apologized to Mr. Edmonds here in this Legislature. I still feel that he was treated disrespectfully. I don't know what the original direction that Mr. Hudak, the member for Erie–Lincoln, minister at the time, gave to the corporation. I would hope that all members who have any relevant information about this would come forward. But I think most importantly, the action of this Legislative Assembly, this place, should be to put in place the changes that will make sure that we don't have additional cases where Ontarians are treated in this manner again.

I am confident, along with the Ombudsman, along with the board chair and the corporation, that we can and we will, in as quick a manner as possible, implement the recommendations of the Ombudsman and change the corporate culture so that this kind of incident does not happen again.

Mr. Hampton: This is not about the Fifth Estate. This is about the fact—and the auditor details it—that just before you became minister, as you became minister and during your two years as minister, innocent people in Ontario were being ripped off because of insider activities at the Ontario lottery corporation. It was leading to court cases, it was leading to out-of-court settlements, it was leading to the media filing freedom of information requests.

My question is, what were you doing? The Ombudsman tells us that a culture of “Simply collect the money and forget about protecting the public” was in place. But you were minister while all this was happening. Didn't you do what a reasonable person would do? Didn't you ask any questions? Didn't you feel a responsibility to protect the public, or were you merely collecting the money as well for the McGuinty government?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I think, quite clearly, the Ombudsman has already rendered an opinion about the co-operation and about the action of myself as minister and of this government. The Ombudsman is an impartial officer of this Legislature and, of course, has some very strong views.

I see you have the Ombudsman's report in front of you. If you turn to page 68, you will read, as I did, “I commend the minister and the government for its openness and responsiveness to my report and the recommendations and for their immediate and resolute commitment to ensuring change.”

The culture of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. was set when the New Democrats set up this corporation. We are taking the appropriate moves to split off the marketing and sales function from the oversight and regulatory function. My colleague the Minister of Government Services and I, along with the Ombudsman, are working to put the regime in place, which unfortunately you and your government did not when you set up this corporation.

All action will be taken to ensure that the public trust and confidence are maintained—

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

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Deborah Matthews (London North Centre): My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, our government's fourth budget that you delivered last week goes a long way toward expanding opportunity for the most vulnerable children in our society. I know I've been hearing loud and clear from constituents in my riding that investing in those who most need help is not only, as you have put it, "a moral imperative," it's also the right thing to do for our economy.

I was very proud, sitting here in this Legislature last week, to hear about how the government is making important strides on this front. Minister, please tell me and the other members here what our government is doing to help every Ontarian participate in our province's prosperity. How will that strengthen our economic advantage?

Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I want to thank my friend from London North Centre for the question and for the work she's done on this file.

The central theme of last week's budget was that Ontario is entering an era of new economic strength. One of the purposes of the budget was to ensure that that new economic strength is shared fairly with 13 million Ontarians. In particular, we made special emphasis through the new Ontario child benefit to direct additional support to 1.3 million children and 600,000 families that are living in poverty.

If I might, I simply want to quote the reaction of Gail Nyberg, who's the executive director of the Daily Bread Food Bank, where she says, "The Ontario child benefit will reduce barriers faced by families with children who are trying to leave welfare for work. At the same time, it will help reduce child poverty and hunger." I'm very proud of that.

Ms. Matthews: I'm sure all Ontarians understand the importance of investing in our families and in our kids. But, Minister, I've got many businesses in my riding as well, and they've been telling me for some time about the problem that exists with unfair business education tax rates in London. They've told me how these unfair taxes were impeding their ability to remain competitive. Please tell us what our government is doing to address this situation of unfair business education taxes.

1500

Hon. Mr. Sorbara: Here's an area—not to get too political about it—where the previous administration really screwed it up, because they created a system of business education taxes which were different all over the province. My friend represents the people in London North Centre. For nine years, the city of London has had higher business education taxes than right across the way in Middlesex.

We're reforming that system. We are creating a new system of business education taxes over the course of seven years. We're reducing the burden by over half a billion dollars. We're creating a system with one rate:

1.6%. It will be fairer and create fair, competitive opportunities for businesses in every municipality right across Ontario.

ONTARIO LOTTERY
AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the minister responsible for the lottery corporation. The minister talked to the House earlier about the circumstances surrounding the departure of Duncan Brown, the chief executive officer.

The minister claimed that full disclosure was given about the departure, that the departure was reported on Friday at 6 p.m. on CTV. I believe you said that everything was handled in the proper manner: A news release was put out, and then the matter became public in the ordinary course. In fact, it was on the news at 6 o'clock that night—the usual time for a press release, of course. Friday night at 10:30 was when the news release was put out, after it had been on the news. The next day, it was reported by the Toronto Star that this decision was taken by your office on Wednesday and that you just didn't want it to come out until Monday.

I want to know this from you, and the people have the right to know this: Did you arrive at some agreement with Mr. Brown, have some discussions with him or with his representatives to have him leave this post on Wednesday or any time earlier than Friday? Why did it get on the news before the news release came out, and why did you try to cover it up until Monday?

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): I want to tell this member and all members of the House that I had no discussion with Duncan Brown, that in fact he and the board had a discussion on Friday, came to the determination that separation was in their mutual interests, and it was agreed to by both parties at that time. As I've indicated to the member, once that decision was taken, our office contacted the Ombudsman and a press release was issued to let the people of the province of Ontario know.

It's important to understand that the government is taking steps in order to implement the Ombudsman's recommendations to change the security measures and all of the other things, as we had undertaken to this House so many months ago. Those are the facts of the matter, and I'm happy to provide the information to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Tory: If you're happy to provide the information to the Leader of the Opposition—and it's really the public who wants to know this. The public has the right to know, if they're going to be out buying the tickets and playing the games, that they've seen everything here, that all the details are on the table and there is nothing more to be investigated.

All we've asked you is this: for two simple sets of information to bring to the House. It shouldn't be hard to do. The first is memos, correspondence or briefing notes

between you and the board of the lottery corporation and people in your office concerning all of these matters; the second is a copy of Mr. Brown's contract, together with the accompanying correspondence concerning his separation. Will you undertake to bring those things to the House and table them so we don't have to go through the process of freedom of information, where we know you will stonewall and drag it out for as long as possible? Will you bring that information here and table it so that the public can see it—the people who buy the tickets—can see that your job is to protect and to uphold? Will you bring it here?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: This is a government which has had the standing committee on government agencies, chaired by your own member, provide oversight. This is a government which welcomed the Ombudsman coming and doing an investigation. This is a government which, through myself, directed the chair of the board to have an investigation, get to the bottom of this matter, and brought in KPMG.

I have, as I had mentioned earlier, spoken to provincial Auditor General Jim McCarter and asked whether or not he and his office would be agreeable or thought it would be appropriate to look into the matter at the OLG in light of the allegations which were raised. The Auditor General, Mr. McCarter, said that he felt it would be, in his words, overkill for him to get involved.

Notwithstanding that, in light of the Ombudsman's comments today, I have directed the OLG to turn over all files reviewed by the Ombudsman and any other relevant material to the Ontario Provincial Police. They will review the matter that was brought up by the Ombudsman and it is they who will determine and take—

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

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): Minister, while people like Mr. Edmonds were being fraudulently ripped off and while other ticket owners may also have been taken the cleaners, the Ombudsman says, while you were doing nothing, “Rather than dealing head-on with the problem of retailer theft and fraud, the corporation opted to embark on a cosmetic makeover,” in the spring of 2006. This is while you were minister. The cosmetic makeover involved the expenditure of \$3.5 million.

Minister, can you explain how you did nothing and how the Ontario lottery corporation did nothing to stop this fraud, and in the meantime, you allowed them to go ahead and spend \$3.5 million on a cosmetic makeover?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: As I just said to the leader of the official opposition, I have instructed OLG to submit all of the files, all of the information that was reviewed by the Ombudsman to the Ontario Provincial Police. If this member has some information he feels is relevant to that investigation, I would encourage him to come forward and share with the Ontario Provincial Police whatever information he feels that he has.

I have every confidence in the OPP. I have every confidence in the Ombudsman. I think he has done a

thorough job. I think the recommendations in his report are fair and well-balanced, and that is why, on behalf of the government, I have embraced the recommendations. We have already taken steps to implement, in the case of both the Ombudsman's and KPMG's report, 17 of the recommendations, another 25 will be implemented by the end of June, and the other 18 are ongoing and we'll get to as quickly as we possibly can to make sure they come into force and effect.

Mr. Hampton: This is not about the Ombudsman. This is about the fact that you were asleep at the switch for two and a half years while these things were happening. The Ombudsman states in his report, “Prior to October 2006, there was an inappropriate ... culture within the OLG ... the OLG had become fixated on profit rather than public service.”

At the same time, this is what you said: “Ontario Lottery and Gaming has significant internal controls ... ‘internal control processes related to our lottery system are appropriate.’”

Minister, can you explain how for two and a half years you heard nothing, you saw nothing, you knew nothing, and it took the Ombudsman only 90 days to discover that innocent people were being ripped off, to the tune of millions of dollars, under your nose?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: If the member would care to continue with the Hansard quote, he would see that I clearly undertook to this House that all the appropriate steps, especially as recommended by the Ombudsman, would be taken to ensure that the public trust and confidence was maintained. Unfortunately Mr. Hampton left that part out. He also leaves out the part in the Ombudsman's report where he says, “I commend the minister and the government for its openness and responsiveness to my report and recommendations and for their immediate and resolute commitment to ensuring change.”

The problem that the Ombudsman has suggested with the culture of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. was rooted in the fact that it was set up by New Democrats with this inherent flaw. We are separating that—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question?

1510

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Judy Marsales (Hamilton West): My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister Sorbara, in Saturday's Hamilton Spectator city councillors complained that the city was not given enough funding support in the 2007 provincial budget.

As the member representing Hamilton West, I know that I and my colleagues represent my community very well, and we advocate all the time on behalf of Hamilton. In fact, you and I have had conversations leading up to the budget discussing Hamilton's needs. Minister, can you please shed some light on why Hamilton councillors might be under the impression that the city is not getting enough funding and what investments Hamilton is, in fact, receiving in this year's provincial budget?

Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I want to tell you frankly that the needs of Hamilton have been one of the things that have been right in the centre of my agenda, really, for the past three-and-a-half years. I think that's why we worked so hard and ultimately invested \$150 million to ensure that Hamilton would have a strong steel producer in Stelco.

In this budget, there are a number of things that I would point to for my friend from Hamilton centre. We're making a special allocation to the city of Hamilton to the tune of \$12 million because we understand the pressure that the city itself is in. In addition, we're providing \$2.1 billion in assistance to Ontario's poorest children. Much of that assistance will go to Hamilton. We're providing an additional \$8.6 million annually directly to the city of Hamilton to assist with housing. I could go on, and perhaps I will in the supplementary.

Ms. Marsales: Minister Sorbara, councillors in Hamilton have said in the media that they find it unfair that the province is gradually phasing out GTA pooling. I know that as the Minister of Finance it must be difficult putting together a budget and debating what decisions to make in the interests of the province. However, Minister, I'd like to ask what the province is doing to help Hamilton fund their social services, and also what thoughts went into ensuring that the city of Hamilton's unique situation would be addressed leading up to the budget last Thursday and how this government is working to ensure that Hamilton remains a strong member of the province's economy.

Hon. Mr. Sorbara: Just to say that in looking at measures that could specifically address the needs of the city of Hamilton, we did a couple of things. We reviewed with city officials their budgetary needs and, as a result of that, we provided an additional \$12 million in direct assistance.

In addition to that, we are in the midst of a comprehensive review of the delivery of social services, not just with Hamilton but with every municipality around the province through AMO and the city of Toronto.

As far as pooling is concerned, the reason why we eliminated pooling is because that represented an unfair burden on municipalities around the city of Toronto. We eliminated pooling simply to put those municipalities on the same footing as every other municipality across the province. That was the fair solution and that's why we opted for that.

ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): My question again is for the minister not responsible for the Ontario lottery corporation.

He has referred repeatedly today to a committee of this Legislature that is very capably indeed chaired by the member for York North. He has referred to that as the place where everybody could go and should have gone

and did go to have hearings with respect to the Ontario lottery corporation. Any question that we wanted to ask there, any information we wanted, should be made available there.

My question for him is this: Why, when that committee was meeting this fall to look into these very matters and to look into all kinds of allegations that were surfacing with respect to incompetence and mismanagement at the lottery corporation, did the Dalton McGuinty Liberal Party use its majority to shut down those hearings on the lottery corporation? When the member for Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford asked on November 29 for more time to get to the bottom of some of these matters, the members—Mr. Gravelle, Mr. Wilkinson, Ms. Smith, Mr. Parsons and Mr. Milloy—shut that debate down, cut it off, used the guillotine to bring down the debate on what we were trying to get to, which is the truth on these matters.

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): I can't speak to the committee deliberations, but I do know that the committee did have a thorough review, did have an opportunity to meet with Mr. Brown, the president and CEO, and Mr. Gough, the chair. The committee did issue its report to this Legislature containing several recommendations. In that report the PC caucus chair, Julia Munro, from York North, commended the OLG for its work and effort. We hear one thing from Mr. Tory today and one thing from his members another day.

I think any reasonable person would take the Ombudsman, an independent officer of this Legislature, at his word for the thorough investigation that he did, and KPMG, one of Canada's leading forensic auditing companies. In fact, I have engaged and talked to the Auditor General of the province of Ontario and invited and welcomed his opportunity to investigate any matter that he thought was relevant or pertinent. We couldn't be any more—

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

Mr. Tory: The Liberals used their majority to cover up then and they're doing it today. The fact of the matter is, when this request was made for additional time on November 29—and I quote from the dissenting report to the committee's report, written by Mr. Tascona, the MPP for Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford, where he says, "The government majority on November 29, 2006 voted down a motion for the OLG to re-attend the committee. The public has the right to have the operations of the OLG stand up to public scrutiny in all respects and the committee must ensure that its report is based on the most current information."

This minister, this government, Dalton McGuinty, shut this down in a deliberate approach to make sure the public did not have information through a committee of this Legislature. We want to know why, and we want to know why you won't just stand in your place and agree to bring all of the documentation here, table it in this House, bring it back to that committee, bring Mr. Brown's contract so we can see just how badly you've

handled this entire fiasco. Why won't you just agree so the public can get their confidence back?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: In fact, additionally, I had the opportunity to appear before the estimates committee and I know that Mr. Hudak presented some very significant questions, presumably on behalf of the Conservative caucus, related to OLG. I was able to provide answers to Mr. Hudak's questions.

I've also mentioned, in light of the Ombudsman's comments at the press conference earlier today, that I have directed OLG to turn over all of its files reviewed by the Ombudsman and any other relevant information that the OPP could request for their review. I will be asking the OPP to review the matter raised by the Ombudsman and it is the OPP who will determine and take whatever steps are appropriate.

I have confidence in the Ontario Provincial Police. I find it curious that Mr. Tory does not. He's already expressed his lack of confidence in KPMG, his party's own auditor. But I want the people of Ontario to know that action has been taken and will be taken to maintain and restore the public trust and confidence. That is what—

The Speaker: Thank you. New question?

Mr. Howard Hampton (Kenora–Rainy River): To the minister, who was obviously asleep at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.: Here is the reality. For two and a half years, you sat there as the minister asleep while innocent Ontarians who were buying lottery tickets were being ripped off, while hospitals and charities in Ontario were being cheated, and you didn't ask any questions; you didn't want to know what was happening. Now, in this latest episode, you're going to pay the departed chief executive officer of the lottery and gaming corporation almost \$1 million to keep him silent.

Minister, what I want to know is, when in the McGuinty government does a minister like you, who should have been protecting the public, have the decency to resign because you weren't and aren't doing your job?

Hon. Mr. Caplan: The Ombudsman in fact commends myself and the government for our openness and responsiveness. Unlike the member opposite, the Ombudsman is a non-partisan, unbiased officer of this Legislature. I have confidence in the Ombudsman and the work that he's done, which is why I have taken the action to ensure the implementation already of 17 of the recommendations; 25 of those recommendations between the Ombudsman and KPMG will be implemented by the end of June, and the other 18 have begun and are ongoing and will be implemented as quickly as possible.

Had this member had this much interest in Ontario Lottery and Gaming when they set up the fatal flaw contained within the organization, had he had this much passion, perhaps we wouldn't have reached this point. I am committed to fixing the mess, which was originally started by the New Democrats, together with my colleague the Minister of Government Services and the Ombudsman to make sure that Ontarians' trust and confidence is protected. That is paramount and that is what—

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary.

1520

Mr. Hampton: Minister, this is about what you were doing for two-and-a-half years while innocent Ontarians were being defrauded out of millions of dollars, and we've already identified that you were doing nothing. You were simply a bump on a log collecting a minister's salary, asking no questions, demanding no accountability.

Here's the record of the McGuinty government: Tom Parkinson gets \$5 million of payola to depart and keep his mouth shut, not to embarrass the McGuinty government. Now we see this corruption uncovered at the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. under your watch, while you were asleep. And what's going to happen? Well, the head of the corporation is going to get almost \$1 million of payola. Meanwhile you, as minister, stand there asleep, as you always have been, not knowing anything, not able to give any answers. Minister, when are you going to do the decent thing? When are you going to resign so the people of Ontario can—

The Speaker: The question has been asked.

Hon. Mr. Caplan: I'm convinced, as is the Ombudsman, that with the appropriate seriousness and directedness, implementing these recommendations will restore the public trust and confidence in their corporation. I'm convinced that an unbiased, independent officer of this Legislature has done a thorough and sweeping and excellent report, a fair and balanced one, has pointed us in the right direction and given us a road map.

I have always dealt with this matter seriously. I've apologized to Mr. Edmonds for the past actions, regrettably, of the previous government. I'm committed to cleaning up the mess which was left by previous governments and to making sure that Ontarians have trust and confidence in their corporation. The Ombudsman concurs. He commends me and he commends the government for its openness and responsiveness to the report and recommendations, and for its immediate and resolute commitment to ensuring change. Speaker, I agree with the Ombudsman.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East): My question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, last Thursday my constituents were very pleased to hear our government's continuing commitment to helping our most vulnerable. Among the many increases in support outlined in budget 2007, we find a commitment to continually increasing the minimum wage in a way that respects the needs of businesses to remain competitive.

Between 2004 and 2007, our government increased the minimum wage four times in four years—17%. After nine long years of Tory neglect, absolutely not one penny did they raise the minimum wage. Our predecessors chose to ignore our lowest-income workers and instead advocated policies to create hardship on our fellow Ontarians during their hour of greatest need. By contrast, the McGuinty Liberals have shown and continue to show

a real compassion for our most vulnerable citizens. Minister, please explain—

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

Hon. Steve Peters (Minister of Labour): I want to thank the member for his question. We are extremely proud, because for nine years we saw no increase in minimum wage. We moved forward with a balanced approach to increase the minimum wage over a four-year period, and that balanced approach that we set is the balanced approach that we're going to continue to take, because it was the right thing to do to raise that minimum wage. By 2010, we will see a \$10.25 minimum wage in this province, the highest in Canada.

Mr. Fonseca: Excellent. Thank you, Minister. The good news from budget 2007 doesn't stop. I'm pleased that our government will be increasing the minimum wage by a further 28% by 2010. Helping our low-income workers is the right thing to do.

But this is not the only way we're helping our most vulnerable. In addition, also announced in budget 2007, we will be enhancing WSIB for 155,000 injured workers and making further investments in affordable housing and in the new Ontario child benefit, which will help 1.3 million children annually.

In addition, your ministry will be receiving \$3.6 million in supplementary funding to help with the current backlog of employment standards claims. I know your ministry has done much, made great progress in improving enforcement in the Employment Standards Act. Minister, please share with us a few words about your further achievements.

Hon. Mr. Peters: I want to thank the member for his question, because unlike the Conservatives and the NDP, who abandoned injured workers in this province—the NDP created the Friedland formula, and the Tories put the enhanced Friedland formula in there and left our injured workers behind. Some 7.5%—more in three years than was given in 12 years by the Tories or the NDP. I'm proud of that. As well, when it comes to enforcement of employment standards in this province, the Tories and the NDP were not there enforcing the Employment Standards Act.

We've set in place a program to have targeted employment standards inspections in this province. We have done more in two years than was done [*inaudible*]. Because under the NDP and Tory governments, ESA prosecutions totalled approximately six per year. That's a total of 97 from 1990 to 2003. Since 2004, there have been over 1,000 prosecutions.

PETITIONS

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. I

know many other people do, so to shorten the time, I'll read the first "whereas":

"Whereas Ontario will not meet the needs of its aging population and ensure access to hospital services unless long-term-care homes can provide the care and services that residents need...."

There are a lot more "whereases," but I'll go to the "we, the undersigned":

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$390 million in 2007 and \$214 million in 2008 to provide an additional 30 minutes of resident care, enhance programs and meal menus and address other operating cost pressures, and introduce a capital renewal and retrofit program for all B and C homes, beginning with committing to provide \$9.5 million this year to renew the first 2,500 beds."

I've signed this.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Parkdale-High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale-High Park): I have a petition to present:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario will not meet the needs of its aging population and ensure access to hospital services unless long-term-care homes can provide the care and services that residents need; and

"Whereas staff are now run off their feet trying to keep up and homes are unable to provide the full range of care and programs that residents need or the menu choices that meet their expectations; and

"Whereas dietary, housekeeping and other services that residents and their families value are being put at risk by increasing operating costs; and

"Whereas some 35,000 residents still live in older homes, many with three- and four-bed ward rooms and wheelchair-inaccessible washrooms; and

"Whereas, on November 23, 2006, this Legislature unanimously passed a private member's motion asking the government to introduce a capital renewal program for B and C homes; and

"Whereas such a program is required to support the limited-term licensing provisions in the proposed new Long-Term Care Homes Act;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$390 million in 2007 and \$214 million in 2008 to provide an additional 30 minutes of resident care, enhance programs and meal menus and address other operating cost pressures, and introduce a capital renewal and retrofit program for all B and C homes, beginning with committing to provide \$9.5 million this year to renew the first 2,500 beds."

I agree with this petition and affix my signature hereto.

1530

RECYCLING

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas waste from Ontario public schools that could otherwise be recyclable is contributing to increased landfill sites; and

“Whereas diverting waste is critical to sustaining a healthy environment now and in the future; and

“Whereas there is a need to encourage recycling initiatives in all schools; and

“Whereas the private member’s bill proposed by the geography club from Georgetown District High School under Making the Grade will require all Ontario school boards to have two recycling bins in each classroom, one for paper and one for drinking containers. As well, cafeterias must have adequate recycling containers outlining items acceptable to be recycled;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the private member’s bill that will amend the Ontario school boards education act to divert waste from Ontario high school classrooms and cafeterias.”

These are signed by a couple of hundred high school students, and I affix my name to this petition as well.

SMITHS FALLS ECONOMY

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): I have a petition regarding the situation in Smiths Falls. The “whereas” clauses outline that the Hershey plant is going to mean 500 people out of work. This, together with the Rideau Regional Centre closing, puts another 800-plus people out of work. For a town of 9,200, these 1,300 job losses are very serious.

They ask the Legislative Assembly to continue to work with Hershey to reverse the decision. They ask that immediate funding for infrastructure projects in Smiths Falls go ahead in order to attract industry. It asks that the four-laning of Highway 7 from Ottawa out to Carleton Place be accelerated in order to better provide transportation to Smiths Falls, and that the government consider postponing the announced closing date of the Rideau Regional Centre past 2009. They also ask that the government of Ontario create a fund equivalent to the northern Ontario heritage fund to attract investment to eastern Ontario. I’ve signed that.

CHILD PROTECTION

Ms. Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I have over 1,100 petitions here that are asking for the Ombudsman’s oversight of children’s aid societies, and they read as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas Ontario is one of the few provinces that does not have independent oversight of child welfare administration; and

“Whereas eight provinces now have independent oversight of child welfare issues, including child protection; and

“Whereas all provincial Ombudsmen first identified child protection as a priority issue in 1986 and still Ontario does not allow the Ombudsman to investigate people’s complaints about children’s aid societies’ decisions; and

“Whereas people wronged by CAS decisions concerning placement, access, custody or care are not allowed to appeal those decisions to the Ontario Ombudsman’s office;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we support the Ombudsman having the power to probe decisions and investigate complaints concerning the province’s children’s aid societies (CAS).”

Of course I agree with this petition. I have signed it and, on behalf of over 1,100 residents of this province, I submit these petitions to the Legislature.

REGULATION OF ZOOS

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex): “Petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly

“Regulate Zoos to Protect Animals and Communities

“Whereas Ontario has the weakest zoo laws in the country; and

“Whereas existing zoo regulations are vague, unenforceable and only apply to native wildlife; and

“Whereas there are no mandatory standards to ensure adequate care and housing for zoo animals or the health and safety of animals, zoo staff, the visiting public or neighbouring communities; and

“Whereas several people have been injured by captive wildlife and zoo escapes are frequent in Ontario; and

“Whereas these same regulatory gaps were affirmed recently by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in his annual report;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support MPP David Zimmer’s bill, the Regulation of Zoos Act.”

I will also affix my signature to that petition.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I have this petition signed by hundreds of people from the Leacock Care Centre in Orillia.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario will not meet the needs of its aging population and ensure access to hospital services unless long-term-care homes can provide the care and services that residents need; and

“Whereas staff are now run off their feet trying to keep up and homes are unable to provide the full range of

care and programs that residents need or the menu choices that meet their expectations; and

“Whereas dietary, housekeeping and other services that residents and their families value are being put at risk by increasing operating costs; and

“Whereas some 35,000 residents still live in older homes, many with three- and four-bed ward rooms and wheelchair-inaccessible washrooms; and

“Whereas, on November 23, 2006, this Legislature unanimously passed a private member’s motion asking the government to introduce a capital renewal program for B and C homes; and

“Whereas such a program is required to support the limited-term licensing provisions in the proposed new Long-Term Care Homes Act;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$390 million in 2007 and \$214 million in 2008 to provide an additional 30 minutes of resident care, enhance programs and meal menus and address other operating cost pressures, and introduce a capital renewal and retrofit program for all B and C homes, beginning with committing to provide \$9.5 million this year to renew the first 2,500 beds.”

I’m pleased to sign that in support.

ONTARIO DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Mr. Rosario Marchese (Trinity–Spadina): I’m reading a petition on behalf of Paul Cochrane, chair of self-advocates of Community Living, and also on behalf of so many who are served by Community Living Toronto.

“Whereas the Ontario disability support program is designed to meet the unique needs of people with disabilities who are in financial need or who want and are able to work and need support; and

“Whereas it is appreciated that the McGuinty government increased the maximum monthly rates for ODSP by 3% in 2004 and a further 2% in 2006;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to increase the Ontario disability support program payments on an annual basis to ensure it covers the cost-of-living increase incurred by ODSP recipients.”

I support the petition and I’m signing it.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale): I have a petition that has been presented to me by the Anglican diocese of Toronto.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas 122,000 households across Ontario are” now “on waiting lists for affordable housing...;

“Whereas housing affordability problems are worsening in Ontario...;

“Whereas Ontario’s current social housing stock is increasingly rundown, with tenants forced to endure degrading conditions...; and

“Whereas the cost of ignoring the plight of our poorly housed and homeless neighbours affects all citizens of Ontario...;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly ... as follows:

“To ensure there is a major allocation of funding for affordable and supportive housing” flowing out of the 2007 “budget, with a commitment to release this funding quickly; and

“To urge the government of Ontario to reassume financial responsibility for the cost and repair of the ... social housing stock which was downloaded onto municipalities who cannot afford” their “repair and upkeep costs.”

This was signed by 1,018 Anglicans in the diocese of Toronto.

LAKERIDGE HEALTH

Mr. John O’Toole (Durham): I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of Paul Taylor and others. It reads as follows:

“Whereas we, the undersigned, believe that Lakeridge Health should have full funding and not be facing an \$8-million shortfall;

“Whereas this would affect many programs, including the mental health program at Lakeridge Health;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fully fund the \$8-million shortfall for Lakeridge Health.”

I would remind members as well that there is a meeting this Tuesday night, tomorrow, 7 p.m. until 9 p.m., on mental health at the Legends complex in Oshawa. I’m pleased to support this on behalf of Nola Mitchell and many others.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): “We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$390 million in 2007 and \$214 million in 2008 to provide an additional 30 minutes of resident care, enhance programs and meal menus and address other operating cost pressures, and introduce a” paid “capital renewal and retrofit program for all B and C homes, beginning with committing to provide \$9.5 million this year to renew the first 2,500 beds.”

As I am in full support, I affix my name.

Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas Ontario will not meet the needs of its aging population and ensure access to hospital services unless

long-term-care homes can provide the care and services that residents need; and

“Whereas staff are now run off their feet trying to keep up and homes are unable to provide the full range of care and programs....; and

“Whereas dietary, housekeeping and other services ... are being put at risk....; and

“Whereas some 35,000 residents still live in older homes....; and

“Whereas, on November 23, 2006, this Legislature unanimously passed a private member’s motion asking the government to introduce a capital renewal program for B and C homes....;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$390 million in 2007 and \$214 million in 2008 to provide an additional 30 minutes of resident care, enhance programs and meal menus and address other operating cost pressures, and introduce a capital renewal and retrofit program for all B and C homes, beginning with committing to provide \$9.5 million this year to renew the first 2,500 beds.”

1540

LABORATORY SERVICES

Mr. Norm Miller (Parry Sound–Muskoka): I have a petition to do with the Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare community lab service. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the residents of the communities served by Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare (MAHC) wish to maintain current community lab services; and

“Whereas maintaining community lab services promotes physician retention and benefits family health teams; and

“Whereas the funding for community lab services is currently a strain on the operating budget of MAHC; and

“Whereas demand for health services is expected to continue to rise with the growing retirement population in Muskoka-East Parry Sound; and

“Whereas the operating budget for MAHC needs to reflect the growing demand for services in the communities of Muskoka-East Parry Sound;

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

“That the McGuinty government and the Minister of Health increase the operating budget of Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare to permit continued operation of community lab services.”

I support this petition.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. John O’Toole (Durham): I’m pleased to read a petition on behalf of the citizens of the riding of Durham, which reads as follows:

“Whereas Ontario will not meet the needs of its aging population and ensure access to hospital services unless

long-term-care homes can provide the care and services that residents need; and

“Whereas staff are now run off their feet trying to keep up and homes are unable to provide the full range of care and programs that residents need or the menu choices that meet their expectations; and

“Whereas dietary, housekeeping and other services that residents and their families value are being put at risk by increasing operating costs; and

“Whereas some 35,000 residents still live in older homes, many with three- and four-bed ward rooms and wheelchair-inaccessible washrooms; and

“Whereas, on November 23, 2006, this Legislature unanimously passed a private member’s motion asking the government to introduce a capital renewal program for B and C homes; and

“Whereas such a program is required to support the limited-term licensing provisions in the proposed new Long-Term Care Homes Act;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase long-term-care operating funding by \$390 million in 2007 and \$214 million in 2008 to provide an additional 30 minutes of resident care, enhance programs and meal menus and address other operating cost pressures, and introduce a capital renewal and retrofit program for all B and C homes, beginning with committing to provide \$9.5 million this year to renew the first 2,500 beds.”

I’m surprised this was not in the budget, but I will sign the petition on behalf of my constituents.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling (Lanark–Carleton): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Today, in question period—I’ll defer this until tomorrow.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2007 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 22, 2007, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

Mr. John Tory (Leader of the Opposition): It is indeed my pleasure once again this year to join in this debate and to express on behalf of the official opposition, the Progressive Conservative Party and my colleagues, but also, I think, on behalf of the people of Ontario, our profound disappointment at the overall thrust of this budget and as much as what it did not contain as what it did.

You know, if you look at the budget—and I learned this in business; I think families would go through the same thing—the one place where the rubber really hits the road is when you sit down and decide how you’re going to allocate the resources that you have. So when a family sits down at the dinner table and has a discussion

about how much they're going to allocate for perhaps a new car if we have the money this year, and how much we might be able to put aside for a vacation, can we take one at all or not, that's one of the most important meetings they will have over the course of a year, because it really forces them to set priorities for that family. It forces them to make decisions. It forces them to indicate what's really important and, by definition, what's not.

I think the same is true in a business; the same is true in a government. So I really think when you want to take a look at what a government cares about, what a government doesn't care about, whether the government is actually delivering for people, the best place to look is probably in the budget. I think when you look at this budget you can see—I'm going to talk positively about one thing that's there, although, again, with some qualifications. You always have to watch this group because they're known as record-setters when it comes to not keeping their promises. I guess if I had to start anywhere, and I'll say it with—

Interjection.

Mr. Tory: No, no, no. I wanted to start positive; I really, really did. The Minister of Finance has now come in and I thank him for being here. I wanted to start positive and I wanted to say this: The Progressive Conservative Party and myself as leader support the attention that was paid in terms of at least the sentiment that lies behind the need to do something to address the circumstances in which, in particular, children in working families in Ontario find themselves. We would agree with what has been said; namely, that there are far too many—in fact, one is too many—children living in poverty or in severely disadvantaged circumstances in this province.

At first blush—and this is the part where I have to qualify the support a little bit—the child benefit introduced in the budget looks like something that will take some positive steps. We're still trying to analyze the interrelationship between the measures undertaken by Mr. Flaherty in his budget federally and this one. And we certainly have some concerns with respect to the timing of this, in the sense that if the problem is as urgent as I believe we all believe that it is, then it certainly seems, especially in light of some of the minister's projections with regard to his fiscal circumstances, that it's taking an awfully long time for this benefit to be fully provided to the children of Ontario who find themselves, through no fault of their own, in these circumstances.

It's interesting to me that when it moves the government, as a result of the electoral timetable, to have a down payment available of this child benefit on July 1, undoubtedly with some flowing letter from the minister or the Premier taking personal credit for this use of the taxpayers' money, they can move heaven and earth to get that sort of thing done. Yet in example after example after example we've seen before, whether it's getting money out the door or not, as the case may be, to farmers, whether it's getting money out the door to almost anything else, it sometimes takes years for any-

body to get any money. So in this case, I would point out that it seems to be taking an awfully long time, and I'll come back to this because one of the real features of this budget—I think it might well have been called the back-end-loaded budget because everything in it pretty much is severely back-end loaded; in fact, going out as far as 2014, which is after the election after this one. So we've now got, I think, a new record being set here, not for long-term planning. I wish there was any hint of long-term planning in this budget at all, that it maybe had a transit plan that went out 10 years with the money or had a plan for the municipalities that went out 10 years with the money. But what we have here is that any time anything good is going to be done to help children in poverty, to help the municipalities and so on, it seems to take years and years and years. Yet when it's something that suits the government's political purposes, there will be something done on virtually an instantaneous basis.

But I will say that the sentiments expressed—and I'd like to hope that when we've finished examining all the details and had a chance to question the ministers and really get to the bottom of how this is going to work, we will be able to be supportive of this. The way the system works, of course, I'm sure this is buried inside one overall piece of budget legislation, and so with all of the different things that we find that are falling short in this budget, it may well be that we will not be able to vote separately for this. But if it's brought in as a separate piece of legislation, we want to take a serious look at it and we would like to be in a position to support this because I think it is the right thing for the province to do.

Aside from some of the things I've already mentioned, which is the back-end-loaded budget and the fact that there really is no long-term plan set out at all, I'd like to start from the premise that something is going on here that I think is deeply troubling to a lot of people in the province of Ontario, and that is that they see their province slipping in front of their eyes.

I don't think the minister intended this when he went off to read to the students on the day before the budget, when he chose the book *The Little Engine That Could*. That is a great story of determination by the little guy and so forth and so on, but the fact of the matter is, I don't think the people in this province have historically seen their province this way and I don't think they want to see their province this way. I think they yearn for a day when we can re-establish this province with the strength and tradition of leadership that it has had over the years.

I'm speaking not of any particular political party. I'm not even speaking of any particular government in this province. I am talking about days not too far gone by, when this province was not the little engine that could; it was the big engine that did. This province was the economic engine of Canada. It was the province that the other provinces looked to for economic leadership, for educational leadership, for health care leadership, for government administration leadership and so on. We were looked to as the example. In fact, there were many instances in which people came from around the world

and across the United States to see what Ontario was doing.

1550

But in particular, the slippage that has taken place—and really, if you look, if you want to get into what happened, the fact of the matter is that during the previous Progressive Conservative government—I believe my numbers are virtually correct—the average rate of economic growth during that period of time I think was 3.6%. During the time of the current Dalton McGuinty government, the same number has been something—a full point and more below that. Not only is that costing jobs to the people of the province of Ontario—we’ll get to that too—but it is costing the government huge sums of money that are not available for public purposes because Mr. McGuinty has allowed this province to slip further and further behind.

When was the last time the people of the province of Ontario read a report written by the Royal Bank of Canada indicating not that Ontario was third, not that we were second, not that we were fifth, but that we were dead last in Canada in economic growth—more than half a point of economic growth behind Prince Edward Island? This is not me making up a number because I’m the Leader of the Opposition. This is the Royal Bank of Canada indicating Ontario was dead last under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty—dead last.

I don’t make up the numbers that suggest that 30,000 people left Ontario to go to Alberta last year—30,000 people left Ontario to go to Alberta. In fact, there was such an out-migration from this province that had there not been immigration coming to Ontario from outside the country, the population of Ontario actually would have gone down. That’s not the kind of thing people are used to in this province. They’re used to Ontario being a magnet for people from the rest of the country to come here because they thought we had good government, we had a strong economy, we had a dynamic economy, we had an environment that was conducive to the creation of jobs and to risk-taking. But in fact, that is no more under the leadership of Dalton McGuinty—or should I say the lack of leadership of Dalton McGuinty. Now, why is that? Well, I think it starts with the fact that there is no plan. There is no plan. I will come back to the things that were not in this budget, because there were not many things in this budget that we all know, and the people of Ontario know, are urgently needed—urgently needed in order to get this province back on track and get it back to being the big engine that can and the big engine that does.

There is no plan, and it really just fits in with the rest of what has gone on. We have highlighted to the public, we have highlighted to the media, and I’m here today to highlight to the Legislature, and through the Legislature to the people of Ontario, the fact that what we have seen here is an explosion of spending without results on the part of Dalton McGuinty. Dalton McGuinty is spending \$22.4 billion more of the taxpayers’ money today than was the case when he took office in 2003. That number

in and of itself doesn’t necessarily mean very much. It means something within the context of what you get for the money that was spent. If people had got a lot for the money that was spent and there were lot of results to show for it, then they might say, “Well, it still seems like an awful lot of money,” especially when it’s financed on the backs of taxpayers who are struggling to keep up. But at the end of the day, the really disconcerting part of all this is that the government of Ontario under Dalton McGuinty has spent \$22.4 billion in additional monies without achieving any significant results at all.

You would have thought, for the appropriate share of \$22.4 billion, that we would have emergency rooms in the hospitals—

Interjection.

Mr. Tory: I’m sorry, the minister is just unable to contain himself, Mr. Speaker.

You would have thought that you would have some results in the emergency rooms of our hospitals, for example, that for the share of the \$22.4 billion that went to those emergency rooms, those things would be operating better for now. Yet we can come in here, and I meet people weekend after day after night who tell me stories.

One that I raised in the Legislature a short time ago: Mr. Katz from Thornhill, Ontario, wrote to me and said he had taken his wife to the North York General Hospital emergency late one evening for an emergency situation related to her being a cancer patient receiving chemotherapy. He says, “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.” What kind of results is this for \$22.4 billion of additional government spending?

When I was at the waiting room not too long ago in Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital in Burlington, they said they were running at about seven to eight hours average waiting time, when in fact the benchmark accepted by the Dalton McGuinty government is four hours. What kind of result is that for the share of \$22.4 billion in additional government spending?

Mr. Katz then goes on to say in his own e-mail, unrelated to his wife’s terrible hardship in the emergency room, that he himself found out a couple of days later that he had to see an ophthalmologist. This was in October 2006. He was told that his appointment would be in August 2007. So he was told by his doctor that he needed to see an ophthalmologist, and after the expenditure of \$22.4 billion of the taxpayers’ money, he’s told the best he can do to get an appointment to see that doctor is almost a year.

How about Judy Brown of Woodstock? She tore the ligaments in her knees 15 months ago. She was told that she would have to wait six months to see a specialist about her torn ligaments. She then wrote to the government and they referred her all over the place—the usual rigmarole they give you. She was told that she would have to wait and wait and wait because the operation that she needed to have—namely, to fix ligaments—was not a priority surgery. She was going to wait

months and months in pain and discomfort, having had this accident befall her. So you have to ask yourself, when it came to Ms. Brown from Woodstock, what was the share of the \$22.4 billion that was of any help to her in her hour of need for some health care in this province?

I was at the Peel Memorial Hospital one day in the fall of last year. On the day I was there, the average wait time in that emergency room in one of Canada's fastest-growing cities was 12 hours. There were 25 people in the emergency room on stretchers, people who had been admitted to the hospital and were lying in the hallways in undignified circumstances, not receiving the proper care. Ambulance crews were sitting in a waiting room and waiting around because they couldn't hand the patients over to the hospital, since the emergency room itself was in chaos because there were no beds upstairs for the people who had been admitted. Where were the results from the \$22.4 billion in additional spending when it came to those times, those people waiting in that emergency room and the chaos we saw going on there? So on the emergency rooms, you would say, well, there are no results there to speak of. There's still chaos, there are still reports being written, and people are still coming in to tell us about the horrors they are experiencing in emergency rooms.

How about gridlock? We do have the typical one-time, one-off one project: one press conference, one show-business, glitzy project which is going to do, I'm sure, a little bit of good. I'm sure it will. But the fact of the matter is—and I should be fair. It wasn't just the one project; it was one that was a bit larger, namely the York University-York region subway, but there were also the Mississauga and Brampton projects at the time. But we sit here in the fourth year of the mandate, at the 11th hour, when they are about to be experiencing, as they have been, these deathbed repentances, and notwithstanding that they are on their deathbed now—they are in their agonizing final days where they're about to be turfed out by the people; their contract is about to expire—the fact of the matter is that we have, in response to the expenditure of \$22.4 billion of the taxpayers' money, not a shred of an integrated, funded long-term transportation plan for the GTA and for southern Ontario. We have a little project here and a bigger project there, all one-off, all very mysteriously picked out of the air for reasons best known to the minister, and no plan.

In fact, we have an agency set up, and they have managed to hire some people. They appointed a very good chairperson; I will say that. It had its first meeting last week. They promised it in three or four budgets in a row; I think it was three, to be fair. Finally, after the third time it was promised, in last year's budget, we got the agency set up. It just shows you how high a priority gridlock and the grief experienced by people living in the GTA are not for the Dalton McGuinty government. The fact is, they promised it in three consecutive budgets. Now we have the agency. It has no real mandate, no money and no teeth to get anything done, but they have at least managed to have their first meeting coincident

with the deathbed repentance of Dalton McGuinty and his government as they're about to be turfed out of office. So for \$22.4 billion, the people sitting in their cars and having trains they can't take because they don't exist, buses that don't exist and transit systems that are starved for money, and no funding formula that has been restored—notwithstanding this budget, they are seeing nothing for them.

1600

Then we come to the area of municipal finance. The words of the mayors and the chairman of AMO speak better than I could about this, because they're the people who really are in a position of complete objectivity on this. But what we've seen there, again, is the same old story: Let's sprinkle a little bit of money around and let's do some of the last-minute shove-it-out-the-door unconditional grants to people and hope we can keep them all happy, and hope by kind of saying, "Over here, look at this unconditional money I'm giving you," they'll ignore the fact that over there, they've done nothing to fix a problem that Dalton McGuinty ranted and raved about before the 2003 election. Downloading, and the subject of downloading, and the hardship this imposed on hard-working property taxpayers and municipalities in Ontario, couldn't have occupied more time in his speeches, yet what has he done with the \$22.4 billion to address and to fix that problem? The answer is, next to nothing. Don't take it from me. Let's start with councillor Sam Merulla from Hamilton. He describes the budget—

Hon. Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): Don't go there, John.

Mr. Tory: I clearly have hit some sort of sensitive spot with the Minister of Finance. I don't know whether we need to get him medical aid or not. You might want to get some medical aid, Mr. Speaker. He's clearly shouting and turning red, and I'm not sure what is going on here.

Here is what Councillor Sam Merulla said. He just said, in describing the budget, "It's a slap in the face to Hamilton." Now, we haven't seen the members from Hamilton up on their feet saying, "This is an outrage, the way Hamilton was treated." Hamilton, which represents a great opportunity in this province—there is land to be developed there, there are jobs to be had there, there's industry to be attracted, there are condominiums and housing to be built, yet what we get here from Dalton McGuinty is "a slap in the face to Hamilton"—not my words; the words of a member of the Hamilton council.

But it gets better. It gets better. Let's go to the mayor of North Bay. He was even more concise in his review of the Minister of Finance's budget. Mayor Vic Fedeli, North Bay Nugget, March 23rd, 2007, said, "We got skunked." There is a community where they have completely left them out in the cold. They've left them out in the cold—millions of dollars of unfair mistreatment to the people of North Bay who are now, thanks to Dalton McGuinty, going to face massive increases in their property taxes or huge cutbacks in their provincial services because of decisions deliberately and calculatedly made by Dalton McGuinty.

Now, let's not stop there. Why don't we go to London, Ontario, where Deputy Mayor Tom Gosnell, the budget chief of London, says, "That"—meaning the welfare increases—"is going to be downloaded to us and that's what we were hoping would be uploaded." So he is commenting on the fact that the very thing they hoped might be the subject of some relief they were given as part of the \$22.4 billion in spending without results from Dalton McGuinty was in fact something else that is going to increase their costs over the next period of time.

So maybe you sort of say, "Well, it wasn't the day for the municipalities."

Interjection.

Mr. Tory: Oh, I have more here. I really should; there is more. These are so good, you know. Here, this is a good one. Carolyn Parrish, the well-known former Liberal MP, now a city of Mississauga councillor—these are her words; I want to be very clear on this: "I hate being an ungrateful wench, but come on," she said, "I think the team will still be running candidates. There needs to be a promise to speed that up," meaning to get on with the task of taking some of this \$22.4 billion and producing just a small element of fairness for people who are paying their taxes and who would expect their government to actually be addressing some of these problems.

So you know, you're not going to find anything for the municipalities, because they've been shafted and left out of this \$22.4-billion spending spree. But maybe we could find something if we turned to talk for just a moment about the farmers and the rural municipalities. Of course, we find there the news is equally bleak, unfortunately. The farmers have faced cutback after cutback after ignorance after slap in the face from the Dalton McGuinty government. The Dalton McGuinty government has demonstrated over and over and over again that it doesn't care about farmers. It doesn't care at all. I think that frankly, if they all just went away and stopped doing business, and everybody just folded up the family farms and that was it, they would think that was just fine. It's evidenced by the fact that again this government can spend \$22.4 billion more in spending between 2003 and today and we see a cutback—a cutback—in spending in the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. How do you explain that? Everybody else is just wallowing in all kinds of additional spending, most of which unfortunately, I'd have to say, is not producing any results. But the poor old farmers—not only is there nothing new for them, there's not even the stuff they were able to rely on before, not even a hint in this budget of a long-term plan. But I will come back to that.

So if you look at what was their share of the \$22.4 billion in additional spending by Mr. McGuinty and his government—and by the way, just so people can understand that number or perhaps factor it in a different way, that's \$4,500 for every single family in Ontario that has been spent by way of additional government spending without results by Dalton McGuinty since he took office. On an hourly basis, Dalton McGuinty has increased

spending by \$750,000 every hour. You know, I think there might be people out there who would say, "I don't have any objection to that," if they saw they were getting any value for money. If they saw the emergency rooms were actually working a bit, if they saw that maybe there was a plan for transportation which had been partly funded, if they saw that there was anything good going on—I mean, look at the class caps. This is a policy that was headed in the right direction in terms of having, for the lower grades, smaller classes. But only Dalton McGuinty and his crowd could spend more than the total amount of money that they estimated in their election platform it would cost to achieve the lowering of the class sizes for kindergarten to grade 3—they spent more than the total sum of money, than they said it would cost in total, and only got half the job done for more than the total amount of money. That's the way these guys operate. That's why we spent \$22.4 billion more in taxpayers' money, \$4,500 for every single household watching out there, \$750,000 an hour, and when it comes to class sizes they've spent way more than they said they would spend to get the whole job done and only got half the job done. Where I come from, that's called managerial incompetence. It's called managerial incompetence. It's called, perhaps, trying to bamboozle the public into thinking maybe that that number was unrealistic to begin with; I don't know. But the bottom line is it's the hallmark of the Dalton McGuinty administration: Get half the job done for twice the money. That's the hallmark. That's what they call value for taxpayers' money: Get half the job done for twice the money.

That is why I think Ontario is slipping: There is no plan. I mean, you have to ask yourself, was there any hint anywhere in this budget of a plan for any part of our industries? How about the tourism industry: was there a plan there? No, there was some kind of half-baked reference to something to do with the rebates and so forth—pretty small potatoes. They've got a great ad campaign. And when I say "great," it's great in the sense that it doesn't really tell anybody where to go or what to do when they get there or how to spend their money, but it's nice pictures. I'm sure it was incredibly expensive and it won't help any operators, I don't think, in this province in terms of specifically directing business to their establishments. But having said that, they can muster up a lot of ad campaigns and a lot of brochures, but is there a strategy for tourism? The answer is no, there's not. Is there a strategy for the agricultural sector? No, there's not. Again, there are a couple of odds and sods in there, but there is no strategy for the agricultural sector. There is no plan for the future.

The reason Ontario had a leadership role in the past and wasn't slipping the way it is today under Dalton McGuinty is that Ontario had leadership. Ontario had leaders who were prepared to get up and put plans in front of people that were long-term plans that lasted beyond the date of the next election, plans that had dates and times and places and money, plans where they actually worked with the federal government to look at

the long view and put some things in place that could be done that would bolster the economy of the province and help make Ontario stronger. In fact, what we see here is virtually nothing, virtually nothing by way of even a hint of a plan. I mean, there is not even anything to cause you to say, "You know, I think if we asked a couple of questions in the House, something might come out." Because they're not interested in planning. They're interested in governing in an ad hoc fashion, day to day. Look at everything they've done for the municipalities. Everything they've done is a one-off, ad hoc, one-time, one-year kind of program.

I know from the experience I've had and, frankly, the Minister of Finance knows better too—the Premier doesn't; I don't think he has run a two-car parade before, but the Minister of Finance has run businesses before—that if you are dealing with a situation where everything that you get in terms of money that you're expecting from your partner—and the government of Ontario is a partner for lots of businesses and other governments and so on—if everything you get is coming at the last minute or you don't know that it's coming at all, you're uncertain as to whether it's coming, you are not in a position where you can plan properly. You are having to make decisions at the last minute, you are having to make decisions in a hurry, you are having to make plans without knowing whether you can carry them.

1610

That has been the hallmark of the Dalton McGuinty government: one-off ad hockery, whether it's quick fixes for the farmers, where you hope you can buy a little peace by sending them a bit of money—and believe me, it has been a bit, representing a cutback; whether it's one-off transit projects where you do one project but there's no plan for the long term; or whether it's a one-off for the municipalities where you send them a little bit of money for infrastructure and kind of hope it keeps them quiet until the election is over.

So if you combine "no plan" with "no leadership" with "huge spending without results," that is why you end up in a situation where people do not have the confidence today to make the investments, to take the risks in this province. They are talking with their feet and with their money. They are leaving Ontario. We've lost 120,000 manufacturing jobs. There are other people with great skills and abilities who are leaving this province—30,000 who have gone to Alberta. We have other people who are deciding not to come here. I know that the minister's colleague the Minister of Economic Development has heard the stories, because I have too, and you know they're true: of people who looked at Ontario and said, "I can't really rely on that government. They don't have any rules or programs or anything else in place that seem to last for more than a couple of days' press clippings and then they change their mind or change the rules or change the funding or withdraw the one-off stuff." It just is something that has discouraged people from investing here and discouraged them from making a bet on Ontario, and that in turn has allowed us to slip.

I think it's interesting to look—we've talked a little about the \$22.4 billion in additional spending—at what is not in the budget. These are all—I've got seven of them here that I want to talk about—in my view, very serious omissions. The first is any semblance of a jobs plan. There's nothing you could even cobble together on your most charitable day. I'm fond of my friend the Minister of Finance over there. I wish I could take—I was going to say "a liberal interpretation"—a charitable interpretation of the words in the budget and say that I worked really hard at it and I found two sentences you can actually connect together that represent some semblance of a jobs plan for all those people who are unemployed in this province and who've lost those manufacturing jobs, who are in those towns in the north and the east and are struggling, whose houses are worth less, the shop owners who are struggling because people in town have less money to spend, and so on it goes. In fact, there is nothing—there is nothing. Even my most charitable interpretation doesn't find those two sentences you could cobble together and say that it represents a jobs plan.

Was there anything here, on the part of the government of Ontario and the Minister of Finance and Dalton McGuinty, to match, for example, the initiatives undertaken by the federal Minister of Finance to help spur manufacturing and investment, which everybody knows needs to be done in order to make Ontario more competitive and stop that slippage that's taking place? Did the minister stand up and say, "I'm going to match what has been done by the federal government and make that happen so that industries in this province would have a powerful incentive over the next two years"—I believe it is—"to invest in new plant and equipment"? The answer is no.

What did we get from Dalton McGuinty as opposed to what could have been done to really make the federal initiative in this area a powerful tool for economic growth and to attract investment? We got a manufacturers' council. I think that's going to be a great encouragement to people in London and Smiths Falls and Cornwall and St. Thomas and Oakville and all kinds of places in between and up north who have lost their jobs. I'm sure they're going to take heart. I'm sure they sat in front of the television and watched Dalton McGuinty announce the manufacturers' council and said, "Hallelujah; my salvation has arrived in the form of the manufacturers' council." The best they could probably hope for is that they might be able to find out when that manufacturers' council is having one of its meetings in one of those expensive hotels on which the Dalton McGuinty government spent millions of dollars last year and maybe they could go by and get one of the leftover sandwiches from the meetings, because that's all the manufacturers' council is going to do for those hundreds of thousands of people who have either directly or indirectly been affected by the loss of their jobs in this province.

I think it is a disgrace—nothing less than a disgrace—when we can come in with a budget which says at the end of it that it has, I believe, a \$300-million to \$400-

million surplus and that there was absolutely no room found for any kind of a jobs plan, there was no room found to match the initiative undertaken by the federal government specifically to assist manufacturing in Ontario and elsewhere in the country.

What about the tax changes? Somehow the minister had the spirit move him to say—and I agree with this—that we should be speeding up the capital tax elimination. But he announced last year that if he thought we could do this, if circumstances permitted or whatever the language was, we might speed it up to be done by 2010. The fact of the matter is that he also was saying three or four months ago that he was going to bring in a deficit at that time, I believe, of \$1.8 billion. Here we are in 2007, and there is no reason whatsoever why the minister wouldn't have had the financial flexibility to do a lot more of what he did in a teeny, tiny little step last year, which was to accelerate that elimination if he had chosen to do so and send not only the message to people that, "You are going to pay a lower rate on that job-killing tax that kills investment and discourages investment in new plant and equipment," but send the signal as well that, "We are determined to get Ontario back on track, determined to get you to make those investments now or to do everything we can possibly afford to do to get you to make that investment now, that we care about the health and welfare of manufacturing and other business in the province of Ontario."

In fact what we have is simply a restatement of last year's announcement: "Don't worry. Three more years from now, you'll get some relief." This again is unacceptable. It's unacceptable. We have people hurting in this province, people who badly need to make those investments just to protect the jobs that we still have in Ontario. When the Minister of Finance and Dalton McGuinty had the money to do it, they gave the back of their hand to Ontario manufacturers and said, "We'll see you in 2010," two years after the election, and even then we all know that anything they say running up to an election campaign is not to be believed in any event.

What about—

Hon. Mr. Sorbara: John, it is in the legislation.

Mr. Tory: The Minister of Finance is losing control again. I don't know what is the matter with him. He has clearly taken some excess of caffeine this afternoon. But the bottom line is, he says it's in the legislation, and we all know that this government, the Dalton McGuinty government, would not hesitate to use its majority to ram shut debate on the lottery corporation, to ram through human rights legislation changes or to ram through a change to the capital tax if it suited them to break another promise. To them, breaking promises is just water off a duck's back. They'd pass a piece of legislation in the blink of an eye to break a promise if it suited them. That's what they're all about. They think their word means nothing. Dalton McGuinty is a Premier in this province who has established clearly that he believes his word means nothing when in fact his word means everything to businesses who are looking to invest in this

province and to have the confidence of knowing that they will be able to do business in a place where their government is a reliable and supportive partner.

There's no mention of any decentralization plan or anything at all that the government itself might do through its own operations to help these towns that are struggling across the province: more evidence of no jobs plan whatsoever. The jobs plan is just not there.

The manufacturers' council: lots of good meetings in fancy hotel rooms, probably good food, but that will only be good for the people who belong to the council, who undoubtedly will be great supporters of the governing party, at least for the next few months, until that thing is wound up and those people are sent back to whatever they were doing before.

Hon. Mr. Sorbara: Are you going to eliminate it?

Mr. Tory: No, I am not.

The efficiency plan—the non-existent efficiency plan, because we are talking here about things that aren't in the budget: I have raised this, and I'm sure it is a source of great amusement to the Minister of Finance, and the fact that I have raised it just really proves in some respects how dismissive the Dalton McGuinty government is of, I think, legitimate concerns raised by the opposition, the media and others. But the government has been claiming now in its fourth consecutive budget that it had what I consider to be a fairly limp four-year cumulative target of finding \$750 million in savings. The first year, they set out the target. The second year, they said they were a certain number of dollars along. The third year, interestingly enough—last year—they were at exactly the same number of dollars in savings they had found as they were the year before, meaning they found zero in one whole year in government. Now this year they have magically leaped to the level of \$800 million in claimed savings they have found.

The bottom line is, I have asked 10 times at least, probably 25 times outside of this House, "Let's have the list of the savings that have been identified." There has never been a list published, and that is because there isn't a list. There is no list of savings that have been achieved by this government, because they are so awash in waste and profligacy and extravagant spending and boondoggles and ad campaigns and logo changes and office space and so on, they are so awash in this and up to their neck in waste and just pathetic mismanagement, that they don't possibly have a list that indicates anything they've done that's any good when it comes to this stuff.

I don't have the list here, but I've got it pretty much committed to memory. But I really do want to refer to a few things.

One of the great quotes of all time—here's a great one from none other than Dalton McGuinty, from May 5, 2003: "Our government will use consultants only when absolutely necessary and when there is nobody in the public service to do that work." I think it would be appropriate to look at just one ministry of the government, for example, and see what they've been up to, carrying through on the word of their powerful, strong leader,

Dalton McGuinty, who is committed to better management and only using consultants when absolutely necessary.

1620

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care consultants, 2004-05: 2004, \$17.8 million; 2005, \$29.1 million in consultants. "We will use consultants only when absolutely necessary," said Dalton McGuinty. There you have it: from \$17 million to \$29 million in one year. The communications branch of the Ministry of Education, 2002-03, when the PC government was in office: \$2.746 million. In 2005-06, with Dalton McGuinty using consultants when only absolutely necessary: \$4.4 million. How about the \$5.5 million they spent in the health department on furniture? That's in addition to the \$1.5 million they spent on hotel rooms. It goes on and on. It is a complete, total disgrace.

The \$6 million for the logo change of the lottery corporation: You know what? I said at the time when it came out that it's the tip of the iceberg. When you see that stuff going on in corporations, when you see that kind of decision being made to mismanage, misspend and waste money on frivolous projects, that's when you know it's the tip of the iceberg you're seeing. Sure enough, the chickens have come home to roost today and a long time before today. What we don't know is how much the government is still covering up of what's going on in this \$6-billion corporation.

This is—it's the best example of all, I suppose, in terms of one shining example sitting right there of mismanagement—a \$100-million scandal. Let's make sure we understand that's what this is: The lottery corporation scandal is a \$100-million scandal on Dalton McGuinty's watch. That's what's involved here. It's a \$6-billion corporation where they had a minister and a board of directors who just thought they could sleep through the meetings. Anything could go on on their watch. People could be running around doing all kinds of crazy things and no one cared.

There's no efficiency plan. We've had no list on the claimed \$800 million, which I expect is a complete figment of the minister's imagination.

How about long-term care? We know for a fact—and I've learned about this as I've toured dozens and dozens of hospitals. The reason we have ambulances lined up in front of the hospitals, crews idle sitting in waiting rooms and patients lying on stretchers in the hallways is because the emergency rooms are jammed up. And we know the emergency rooms are jammed up because there are many people in there who had been admitted to the hospital who can't get a room upstairs.

I was at the Kingston General Hospital a couple of weeks ago. On the day I was there, there were 10 people who had been admitted to the hospital who were lying in the emergency room, and two of them who had been there for 10 days. They're there for 10 days in excruciating and inadequate circumstances because there are no beds upstairs. I'm going from memory now, but I think on the day I was at the Kingston General Hospital, either

25 or 30 beds upstairs in that hospital on that day were occupied by people who belonged in long-term care and who needed a long-term-care space. The problem was that there was a waiting list—I'm going from memory again—of about 125 people waiting for a long-term-care bed.

What do we get in Dalton McGuinty's budget for people in need of long-term care? For those who don't have a space, we get exactly nothing—nothing. We get a reannouncement of the same 1,700 spaces—that is, by the way, contrasted with the 20,000 spaces funded by the previous government—that I think they've announced about 411 times over the last two years, and we get some help on the nursing side that, according to the long-term-care association, amounts to 50 cents per resident per day, which the long-term-care association people, I believe, have said amounts to one minute of extra care for people who are presently in long-term care. So there you have it: a budget that decides its commitment to the senior citizens of this province, to any sense of planning for the future in terms of those who will get elderly and need that care going forward, let alone the hundreds who need it today, is a reannouncement of some old spaces that haven't been done yet and that they've reannounced 100 times over, no new capital, and 50 cents per resident per day for additional care. We all know about the broken promise there, where I believe they committed to have thousands of dollars—

Mrs. Julia Munro (York North): Six thousand per resident.

Mr. Tory: —\$6,000 per resident in additional care: a massive broken promise. It's not as big in monetary terms as the health care tax that was brought in by Dalton McGuinty, but in terms of the betrayal of our distinguished and most needy senior citizens, that is probably a bigger betrayal because of who this is done to and how they have completely gone back on their own word with respect to the seniors of this province.

What else was not in the budget? Well, there was certainly no real long-term protection plan for homeowners vis-à-vis assessment. You know, the minister got up and he was so proud of himself.

By the way, I left out a good quote, and I wouldn't want to let it not get on the record. It was about the lack of a jobs plan. It was from the Windsor Star, which normally has been known to parrot whatever the government of the day might have told it. It certainly has not been known to say anything favourable to Conservative causes most of the time. Here's what they said about the budget and jobs, and I quote: "This budget wasn't about Windsor or Essex county. It wasn't about reviving the flagging manufacturing or automotive industries. It wasn't about lowering taxes or creating jobs." That's the Windsor Star. I think they're coming around. They're making an awful lot of sense nowadays. Having said that, that's just what they had to say about the budget, and you know what, Mr. Speaker? They're right.

Now, no real protection plan for homeowners: The minister can try and dress up this dog any way he wants,

but this dog will not hunt. This is not a real plan to protect homeowners. The fact of the matter is, if you see the magnitude of increases taking place on an annual basis—let's pick a round number of 10%, because that would not be an unfair number to pick for many people across this province over the last number of years. If you assume that the average was 10% per year and that under the minister's new scheme they're going to do it every four years, that will be 40%. All that's going to happen is, they are still going to get a 40% increase in their assessment, they're just going to get it averaged over four years, so they still take it in the neck.

As I said—and it was the right thing to say on the day the budget was announced—all they're giving people the time to do is they are giving them four years to pack up their bags when these senior citizens and other people lose their homes, as opposed to a real protection plan put forward by the Progressive Conservative Party that says you will face a maximum increase of 5% per year each and every year as long as you and your spouse own your home. That is real protection for people that will stop this kind of thing from happening that the minister is going to allow to go on ad infinitum.

On top of that, he didn't say a word about what I think is an evil that is in this system, an evil that says that it's up to the taxpayer to prove the government wrong in this, as opposed to it being up to the government to prove itself right. It is not right that this bloated, arbitrary, incompetent organization, MPAC, that was found to be all of those things and more by the Ombudsman—

Hon. James J. Bradley (Minister of Tourism, minister responsible for seniors, Government House Leader): That's your baby, John.

Mr. Tory: The Minister of Tourism just can't help himself. They've been in government for four—he still thinks he's in the opposition. You know what? He's soon going to get his wish, because he will be again. He loves being in opposition. He forgets the fact that Dalton McGuinty and his government have been in office for four years now. Anything they wanted to do with MPAC, they could have done, but the fact of the matter is, just like the lottery corporation, just like the children's aid society, they wait to get caught. They wait until somebody exposes them. In all three of those cases—children's aid, MPAC, the lottery corporation—it was the Ombudsman, on behalf of the people, who worked to expose these people, and only then did they act. They had three years to do something about MPAC if they thought there was anything wrong with it. They did absolutely nothing except to say, "Go on and keep shafting people, keep acting arbitrarily, keep doing whatever you want to them. We don't care. It's out of our hands."

Mr. Speaker, don't take it from me about what they think of the minister's lack of a plan to protect homeowners. Let's listen to what Bob Topp of the Coalition After Property Tax Reform had to say.

Hon. Mr. Sorbara: He doesn't believe in market value assessment.

Mr. Tory: Yes, well, anybody who disagrees with the minister and his schemes is somebody who's a non-believer in democracy and truth.

But having said that, here's what Mr. Topp had to say in referring to the minister's non-plan to protect homeowners: "I don't think it really does the job. It makes taxes, in the short run, more predictable for homeowners but it doesn't deal with the volatility which is the fundamental problem with any market-based system."

1630

We don't alter the fundamental principle that the value itself will be based on market value, but we do put a cap on that reasonably protects homeowners and gives them a degree of certainty and reliability, especially the senior citizens of Ontario, who want and who need that protection. Frankly, when you combine what the minister did not do in long-term care and what he did not do in other areas for senior citizens with this flagrant disregard for the senior citizens and the homeowners of Ontario, you should be ashamed and Dalton McGuinty should be ashamed that you turned your back in this way on the senior citizens of this province.

Rural Ontario and farmers: Well, the numbers here tell a disastrous tale of neglect and a complete overlooking of the rural municipalities and the farmers. Dalton McGuinty said in the election campaign in 2003 that he would make the Ministry of Agriculture and Food a lead ministry in the government—a lead ministry. In fact, we're now budgeting this year for \$191 million less than in 2006-07—\$191 million less. The numbers are right in the minister's own budget. In fact, if you go all the way back to 2004 and 2005, the planned spending is half a billion dollars less than in 2004-05. No long-term plan for the farmers whatsoever, nothing there for them in that regard, total ignorance of the tobacco farmers' call for an exit strategy and to try to piggyback on some of the efforts being made by the federal government. By the way, another broken promise by Dalton McGuinty.

Then we get to two other things that are more general by way of comment. One of them is a complete lack of any sense of urgency on the part of the government for any of these matters that are addressed, or not addressed, as the case may be, in their budget. First of all, if you look at program after program after program, they're pretty well all back-end loaded. That means two things. It means, number one, perhaps most importantly—in fact, for sure most importantly—the people who are supposedly going to get the help, or who need the help if we think they need it, are not going to get it for a long, long time. I reiterate what I said about the child benefit: This has the makings of a good idea. Subject to seeing the detail, it has the makings of a good idea, but it's not going to be fully implemented for years to come—for years to come—at a time when the Minister of Finance himself projects very substantial surpluses for his own government.

The second reason for people to be worried about this back-end loading is because they would have reason to question anything that Dalton McGuinty says in any

document, including, unfortunately, I say with regret, the budget of the province of Ontario. Mr. McGuinty, through his budgets, through his election platforms, through his speeches, has proven himself a person who cannot be believed. No matter what he says, you can't believe him. He is the world record holder. I had a whole list—and it will be in my amendment to the motion—of the major broken promises. I didn't want to trespass on the House's time in terms of moving my amendment to give the full list, but you'll see, even with the smallest list of the major broken promises, that this is a world record.

There has never been a democratically elected government, probably in the history of the world, that has broken as many promises as Dalton McGuinty has, as blatantly and as complete a betrayal of the trust of the voters. So that's why we see the back-end loading as being something that's evil. But more than anything else, aside from the fact that it doesn't get the help to people and it doesn't really bear believing because it's Dalton McGuinty, after all, doing the talking here, really it just betrays a lack of urgency on the part of this government about these problems, all the things we went through that are missing: no jobs plan, no sense of urgency about people who are unemployed or who might be threatened with losing their jobs, no efficiency plan, no concern for the taxpayers—I'll come back to them in a minute—no long-term-care plan. No sense of urgency about that because, after all, it's just people waiting in waiting rooms, people lying in hospital beds who shouldn't be, people who are not getting proper home care.

No real protection for homeowners. Well, after all, it's only the property taxpayers. They can take it in the neck year after year, courtesy of Dalton McGuinty. Who cares? No help for rural Ontario and farmers: They can take another cutback; no problem at all. You know, they're just farmers after all. And so it just goes on and on and on.

But I think the most important thing that I want to mention that's an omission from this budget is any hint, any small token, any indication whatsoever that Dalton McGuinty cares a whiff about the average hard-working taxpayer in Ontario who goes to work every day, does his or her job, pays his or her taxes, plays by the rules, comes home, tries to raise and support their family in a responsible manner and, when it comes to a government that has managed to find \$22.4 billion to spend without results, has managed to come up with numbers that indicate they have a \$300-million-plus surplus this year, growing to some bigger number this year, growing in the year after that to an excess of \$1 billion and, with the reserve, perhaps \$2 billion, there wasn't even the slightest indication that Dalton McGuinty cared enough about those average taxpayers to say, "I will give you an acknowledgment of your hard work. I will give you an acknowledgment of the fact that you are the people who fuel the \$22.4 billion and all the rest of the spending, that you are the people, through your hard work, who make it possible for the government of Ontario to finance health care, education, roads and everything else." There wasn't

even the slightest indication that this government understands how hard-pressed those taxpayers are at the moment to make ends meet for themselves and for their families. There wasn't even the slightest indication that it is, after all, their money that Mr. McGuinty is taking in and spending in such a carefree fashion on logos and lawyers and all manner of things. There wasn't the slightest indication that maybe it would be good for the economy and good for those families if those people were able to actually have some of their own money back.

So if you really look at it for a moment, that's in some respects the most glaring thing that might have at least caused the taxpayers to say, "These people get it. They know how hard I work for that money. They know how much I want to see them try to find value for money," which Mr. McGuinty has been so pathetic in doing as a Premier of this province. They know that we need to have a jobs plan and an efficiency plan and a long-term-care plan and a home ownership protection plan and a plan for farmers and a plan for tourism and so forth. They know money has to be spent on those things, but at the same time they wonder how it is that so much spending could be done, and so much could be left out of the budget of things that might have helped them.

It would have helped these people to have a jobs plan because it's their kids and themselves, in some cases, who are losing their jobs. It would have helped them because it's their parents, in some cases, who are the ones waiting in the hospital beds for a long-term-care position to open up. It would have helped these people because some of them are farmers who are paying their taxes and would have said, "It's bad enough you don't have a program for us. It's bad enough you don't support us in our hour of need. But if you just gave us the slightest indication you care about the hardship that we're going through by saying, in the presence of admitted, huge surpluses that you're going to accumulate, that you could have given us back a tiny bit of the money that you took from us illegally and immorally in a tax that you said you would never bring in—Mr. McGuinty, why couldn't you have done that?" The fact is, there is no good answer to that question.

There is no good answer to that question, other than, I think, some comments we saw from the Premier last Friday which may get a little bit to the root of the way he thinks. He said last week when asked, not by me but by a journalist, "Why couldn't you have given back"—I think the journalist suggested \$100—"to every person who is paying the health tax?" which includes, by the way—I'm sure I'm right in saying this; the minister will correct me, I'm sure, if I'm wrong—some of the very people who will get the child benefit. I believe I'm right that the health tax kicks in at \$20,000, and people start to pay something at that stage.

Hon. Mr. Sorbara: Five dollars, John.

Mr. Tory: Pardon me?

Hon. Mr. Sorbara: Five dollars.

Mr. Tory: Well, fine, then. Why don't you give them back \$5 of the health tax? You gave them absolutely

nothing, because you don't believe in giving the taxpayers back any of their own money, because you are disrespectful of the taxpayers, because the fact that you broke a fundamental election promise not to raise taxes doesn't matter to you, because Dalton McGuinty's word doesn't matter to him when it comes to promises he makes to the people of Ontario.

We will do it differently. Our budget would have contained a jobs plan, because it's the least you can do when you've lost 120,000 jobs. We would have put into effect in this budget, if we'd been the government, a real protection plan for homeowners. We would not have turned our back on an option to cut down on those waiting lists for people waiting in pain to get their knee replacements done when it can be done at public expense, paid for with the OHIP card, by someone in the private sector. We would have said, "Better to get those people off the waiting list, get them the care they need at what is suggested to be a lower cost than the community hospitals can do it for, anyway." We would have embraced that kind of option to provide people with the care that they need.

And in this budget, in the presence of the kinds of numbers that the Minister of Finance himself and Dalton McGuinty put forward, showing billions of dollars in surpluses coming up in the next couple of years—not the next decade; the next couple of years—we would have begun the process of doing away with this health tax, giving the people back some of their own money, because the fact of the matter is, this government can afford it.

I'm assuming, in laying out all their spending projections for the next number of years and showing a substantial surplus, they have put it clearly on the record that they could begin the task of phasing out this health care tax. They could have begun it this year; in fact, it's possible, had they not gone on that irresponsible spending spree last year, they could have begun it last year and given the people some relief they need and started to dig themselves out from underneath the terrible pall that that health tax has cast on the integrity of government and politics in this province and on the integrity of the Premier of this province himself.

1640

I'm going to move an amendment to the motion moved by the minister the other day. But to conclude, I want to just say this: Ontario didn't get to be great by accident. It didn't happen automatically. If you read this budget, this kind of collection of little things here and there that is done with no semblance of a plan, with all kinds of areas, all kinds of things that I've gone through in my remarks today that have been left out—if you go through that, you will see that there's no semblance of a plan here. And when you see Ontario leaders who have been successful, they were real leaders. They had real plans with real objectives and real measurements and real results for spending that was actually done. This government has proven itself incapable of having a real plan. They started off with the best plan, I guess, that they

could come up with in 2003, and that lies today in a shambles. So maybe the reason they haven't come up with another plan is because their first plan ended up being such a self-serving, cynical fiasco of promises that in many cases could never be kept or that they never had any intention of keeping, either of which is an indictment of their integrity and of the integrity of the Premier of this province.

But at the end of day, Ontario didn't get to be prosperous by accident. It got to be prosperous through careful planning, good management and addressing the priorities that needed to be addressed. The very fact there's no long-term-care plan set forward—which, I admit, does involve an expenditure of money, but you are making that expenditure to look after people well but also to save money so you don't have people lying in acute beds at two to three times the cost per day. This is a fundamental concept that I know the Minister of Finance understands—the Premier doesn't because he hasn't really run things before, but Mr. Sorbara does—and that is that sometimes you have to invest money in order to get a return. I think the return on an investment made in long-term care would have been something that would have come fairly quickly; in fact, it would have come very quickly and addressed some very urgent needs of some very vulnerable people. Past governments of all stripes, frankly, from time to time, have recognized this because they had real leadership. They had people who understood that you have to lead. You have to plan, you have to manage properly, you have to lead and you have to actually make some decisions. You can't just do these one-off, ad hoc things and hope it'll tide them over for a while and keep them all quiet and buy a few votes in the meantime.

I do not accept any concept, as is accepted by Dalton McGuinty and this government, of a little Ontario. They have been prepared on their watch to see Ontario diminished. They've seen us slip down the list slowly but surely, pretty well every list you look at, whether it's our commitment to R&D, whether it is our economic growth—any one of the lists that you want to look at. Things are going down the list for Ontario. We are slipping.

We used to be not a little engine that had to struggle to make it over the top of the hill; we were the people that were on the top of the hill trying to figure out how we would stay there, how we would stay in a position of leadership, how we could make sure that we could always look our children in the eye and say to them that we are doing the planning, we are doing the work, we are managing in such a way, we are showing the necessary competence, foresight, determination and discipline that we can look you, our children and even our grandchildren, in the eye and say, "The opportunities you will enjoy and experience in this province will be better than the ones we have experienced." I think there are a great many parents and grandparents out there today in Ontario who would not be able to look their grandchildren and their children in the eye and say, under the leadership of

Dalton McGuinty and this kind of hodgepodge lack of a plan, lack of accountability, lack of results for money spent and so on, that we are going to be able to build the kind of Ontario that we've always been able to be so proud of and that we knew was a leader in Canada—was the leader in Canada—that we knew that we had the plan and the leadership to maintain that kind of leadership position in Canada.

I think that when people look back on this period, they're going to see it as a period of extreme disappointment, where the leadership of this province let the people down, whether they're farmers or residents of small towns or seniors or people who are using the health care system or students or people who are in jobs trying to work in the economy. Their government has let them down because there are no plans for the future, and I've tried to catalogue that today. Read the budget: There are no plans. There is a series of isolated incidents, but no plans.

There is no aspirational statement here talking about how we have to get back to where we were. There's not even really an acknowledgment of the fact that we've slipped. Sometimes the first step on the road to getting back in the game and getting Ontario back to where it needs to be is to acknowledge that we have slipped and to decide together we're going to do something about that to make this province great again, to have some great goals. That is going to be the mandate that is going to lie in front of this party when it comes to office after the election in October of this year because we understand what it's like to manage, we understand what it is like to have a plan, we understand what it is like to have discipline.

I have lived those experiences. My whole career is about that. It is about having deadlines, having plans, having goals, having objectives against which you are measured, having to demonstrate to people that you believe in the concept of value for money, actually believing in enterprise enough to say that we've got to create the environment here that is conducive to enterprise, that is welcoming, that says Ontario isn't just a place on the list to invest but is back to the top of the list of places to invest in Canada, where people want to come and create jobs and are not fleeing this province in record numbers taking their jobs with them.

So I would move that the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on March 22, 2007, "that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government," be amended by deleting the words following the words "that this House" and adding thereto the following:

"recognize that the budgetary policy put forward by the Minister of Finance continues the McGuinty government's legacy of broken promises and demands more and more from taxpayers while delivering less and less, and that this House condemns the McGuinty government for:

"Saying anything and paying anything that they think will get them elected;

"Increasing spending by more than \$20 billion since coming to office—an increase of \$750,000 every hour

they've been in office—and having no results to show for it;

"Increasing spending by more than \$20 billion since coming to office and still failing to keep a huge number of campaign commitments including, but not limited to:

"—the broken promise to not raise taxes;

"—the broken promise to close coal-fired electricity plants by 2007;

"—the broken promise to balance the budget every year;

"—the broken promise to not add to the waste of taxpayers' dollars;

"—the broken promise to provide children with autism the support and treatment they need;

"—the broken promise to stop school closings;

"—the broken promise to ensure 75% of students meet or exceed the provincial standard on province-wide tests within their first mandate;

"—the broken promise to implement a hard cap of 20 students for early grades;

"—the broken promise to provide a new funding formula for rural and northern schools;

"—the broken promise to cap hydro rates at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour until 2006;

"—the broken promise to make the Ministry of Agriculture a lead ministry;

"—the broken promise to eliminate barriers to foreign-trained professionals within one year;

"—the broken promise to spend \$6,000 more per year for individuals in long-term care;

"—the broken promise to unclog emergency rooms;

"—the broken promise to divert 60% of municipal solid waste by 2005;

"—the broken promise to roll back tolls on Highway 407;

"—the broken promise to build 20,000 new affordable housing units;

"—the broken promise to create tens of thousands of new child care spaces; and

"—the broken promise to tackle gridlock.

"Continuing this governments ad hoc, one-off approach to funding key priorities, including a \$50-million last-minute handout to Magna when less than 24 hours later it was announced they were part of \$4.7-billion bid to purchase DaimlerChrysler;

"Referring to tax relief as nothing but 'trinkets and baubles' for hard-working Ontario taxpayers, yet maintaining the government's long-standing practice of rushing money out the door at fiscal year-end to fund pet projects;

"Failing to provide tax relief to middle-class Ontarians despite manufactured deficits and massive spending increases over and above what was contained in their 2003 election platform;

"Overseeing the loss of more than 120,000 manufacturing jobs in the province and failing to respond to a motion passed in this House calling for a comprehensive jobs strategy; and

“Failing to provide the strong leadership to make the important decisions that will deliver results to the people of Ontario.

“Therefore, the government has lost the confidence of this House.”

The Speaker: Mr. Tory has moved that the motion moved by the Minister of Finance on March 22, 2007, “that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government,” be amended by deleting the words following the words “that this House” and adding thereto the following:

“recognize that the budgetary policy put forward by the Minister of Finance continues the McGuinty government’s legacy of broken promises and demands more and more from taxpayers while delivering less and less, and that this House condemns the McGuinty government for:

“Saying anything and paying anything that they think will get them elected;

“Increasing spending by more than \$20 billion since coming to office—an increase of \$750,000 every hour they’ve been in office—and having no results to show for it;

“Increasing spending by more than \$20 billion since coming to office and still failing to keep a huge number of campaign commitments including, but not limited to:

“—the broken promise to not raise taxes;

“—the broken promise to close coal-fired electricity plants by 2007;

“—the broken promise to balance the budget every year;

“—the broken promise to not add to the waste of taxpayers’ dollars;

“—the broken promise to provide children with autism the support and treatment they need;

“—the broken promise to stop school closings;

“—the broken promise to ensure 75% of students meet or exceed the provincial standard on province-wide tests within their first mandate;

“—the broken promise to implement a hard cap of 20 students for early grades;

“—the broken promise to provide a new funding formula for rural and northern schools;

“—the broken promise to cap hydro rates at 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour until 2006;

“—the broken promise to make the Ministry of Agriculture a lead ministry;

“—the broken promise to eliminate barriers to foreign-trained professionals within one year;

“—the broken promise to spend \$6,000 more per year for individuals in long-term care;

“—the broken promise to unclog emergency rooms;

“—the broken promise to divert 60% of municipal solid waste by 2005;

“—the broken promise to roll back tolls on Highway 407;

“—the broken promise to build 20,000 new affordable housing units;

“—the broken promise to create tens of thousands of new child care spaces; and

“—the broken promise to tackle gridlock.

“Continuing this government’s ad hoc, one-off approach to funding key priorities, including a \$50-million last-minute handout to Magna when less than 24 hours later it was announced they were part of a \$4.7-billion bid to purchase DaimlerChrysler;

“Referring to tax relief as nothing but ‘trinkets and baubles’ for hard-working Ontario taxpayers, yet maintaining the government’s long-standing practice of rushing money out the door at fiscal year-end to fund pet projects;

“Failing to provide tax relief to middle-class Ontarians despite manufactured deficits and massive spending increases over and above what was contained in their 2003 election platform;

“Overseeing the loss of more than 120,000 manufacturing jobs in the province and failing to respond to a motion passed in this House calling for a comprehensive jobs strategy; and

“Failing to provide the strong leadership to make the important decisions that will deliver results to the people of Ontario.

“Therefore, the government has lost the confidence of this House.”

Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson (Timmins–James Bay): Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment of this debate.

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

The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Hon. Marie Bountrogianni (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal): I move adjournment of the House.

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

The House adjourned at 1653.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro, John O'Toole,
Ernie Parsons, Khalil Ramal
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CONTENTS

Monday 26 March 2007

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Government's record	
Ms. Scott.....	7363
Juice grape growers	
Mr. Kormos	7363
Healthy living	
Mr. Ramal.....	7363
Government's record	
Mr. O'Toole.....	7363
Education	
Mr. McNeely	7364
Rural Ontario	
Mr. Yakabuski	7364
Ontario budget	
Mr. Levac.....	7364
Mr. Flynn.....	7365
Mr. Duguid	7365

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

Standing committee on estimates	
The Speaker	7365
Report deemed adopted	7366

FIRST READINGS

Supply Act, 2007, Bill 188, Mr. Sorbara	
Agreed to	7366
Armenian Genocide Memorial Day Act, 2007, Bill 189, Mr. Duguid	
Agreed to	7366
Mr. Duguid	7366

MOTIONS

Referral of bills	
Mr. Bradley.....	7366
Agreed to	7367
House sittings	
Mr. Bradley.....	7367
Agreed to	7367

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

Student achievement	
Ms. Wynne.....	7367
Mrs. Witmer.....	7368
Mr. Marchese.....	7368

ORAL QUESTIONS

Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.	
Mr. Tory	7369, 7370, 7373, 7375, 7377
Mr. Caplan ..	7369, 7371, 7372, 7373, 7374, 7375, 7376, 7377, 7378
Mr. Hampton.....	7371, 7372, 7374, 7376, 7378
Ontario budget	
Ms. Matthews.....	7375
Mr. Sorbara	7375, 7377
Ms. Marsales	7376
Mr. Fonseca.....	7378
Mr. Peters	7379

PETITIONS

Long-term care	
Mr. Murdoch	7379
Ms. DiNovo.....	7379
Mr. Dunlop.....	7380
Mr. Ouellette	7381
Mr. Zimmer	7381
Mr. O'Toole	7382
Recycling	
Mr. Patten.....	7380
Smiths Falls economy	
Mr. Sterling	7380
Child protection	
Ms. Horwath.....	7380
Regulation of zoos	
Mrs. Van Bommel.....	7380
Ontario disability support program	
Mr. Marchese	7381
Affordable housing	
Mr. Zimmer	7381
Lakeridge Health	
Mr. O'Toole	7381
Laboratory services	
Mr. Miller.....	7382

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

2007 Ontario budget, government notice of motion number 287, Mr. Sorbara	
Mr. Tory	7382
Debate adjourned	7394

OTHER BUSINESS

Visitors	
Mr. Levac.....	7365
Mr. Rinaldi.....	7365
Mr. Peterson.....	7366
Mr. Yakabuski	7369
The Speaker	7374
Report, Ombudsman	
The Speaker	7365
Visiting clerk	
The Speaker	7365

TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Lundi 26 mars 2007

PREMIÈRE LECTURE

Loi de crédits de 2007,	
projet de loi 188, <i>M. Sorbara</i>	
Adoptée	7366
Loi de 2007 sur le Jour commémoratif du génocide arménien,	
projet de loi 189, <i>M. Duguid</i>	
Adoptée	7366

DÉCLARATIONS

MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Rendement scolaire	
M ^{me} Wynne.....	7367
M ^{me} Witmer	7368
M. Marchese	7368