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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 26 March 2008

Mercredi 26 mars 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 26 March 2008

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 26 mars 2008

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Frank Klees: When Premier McGuinty announced that this Legislature should consider removing the Lord's Prayer from its daily proceedings, he struck at the very core of what millions of Ontarians of diverse backgrounds consider a significant part of their religious heritage. In response, this Legislature has received thousands of petitions from Ontarians of all faiths and cultures, calling on this Parliament to maintain the Lord's Prayer.

Joining us in the House today is Mr. Shadah Khokhar, who is of Pakistani background and who, along with many representatives of the Pakistani-Canadian community, has delivered more than 1,500 signatures in support of that petition. They are here today to call on the Premier to continue to honour their Legislature's parliamentary and religious traditions.

It is not mere coincidence that another petition has been tabled in this Legislature, numbering in the thousands of signatures, that also speaks to honouring our religious and cultural heritage. That petition calls on the Parliament to declare April 2 as Pope John Paul II Day in recognition of his lifelong commitment to international understanding, peace and the defence of equality and human rights.

I ask honourable members to consider the appeal of both petitions before us, as both honour our religious and cultural heritage.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Historically, budgets provide a government with an opportunity to present their plan for the future. Governments should use their budget to introduce new ideas and new initiatives, their plan to deal with the challenges and opportunities facing Ontario. Unfortunately, what we heard in yesterday's budget was a rehash of old announcements and reused rhetoric.

On page 46 of the budget papers we are given an overview of 10 programs; no fewer than eight had already been announced or leaked by this government before yesterday's budget. Contrast these old announce-

ments with the excellent work prepared by the Progressive Conservative caucus with our dissenting report released last week.

Ontario's economic growth is below the national average, and we are losing record numbers of jobs and people to other provinces. Where is the commitment to reduce the job-killing capital tax immediately? Where is the tax relief for hard-working Ontario families?

It is unfortunate that this government has chosen to reannounce rather than set out their plan for the future. Where is the vision? Where is the plan? What we have is a second-term government riding a wave of apathy while the Ontario economy falters and hard-working Ontario families pay the price with high taxes—another missed opportunity.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Bob Delaney: The northwest neighbourhoods of Streetsville, Meadowvale, Lisgar and Churchill Meadows are the fastest-growing part of Mississauga. Since the late 1980s, more than 110,000 people have moved into Lisgar and Churchill Meadows alone.

On September 4, we all celebrated the official opening of the Lisgar GO train station that enabled many of us, including me, to leave our cars at home and take public transit. Every day, up to 900 cars are parked at Streetsville—900 cars that are not on our roads.

And we need more. Go Transit's greatest need in moving people between where they live and where they work and study is all-day service on the Milton line, that Milton line which serves us, and only us, in western Mississauga. Those tracks are owned by CP Rail, and CP Rail uses them at full capacity. To enable GO Transit to offer all-day GO train service, we need a third track between Milton and Toronto. That also means that bridges need to be either replaced or upgraded, including the main span over the Humber River leading into Toronto. The third Milton line track is a Mississauga priority.

In June 2007, our government announced the Move Ontario 2020 plan, a 12-year, \$17.5-billion massive undertaking that is the largest public transit infrastructure investment in North America.

Both GO Transit and the government of Ontario recognize the need for the third track on the Milton line, and that is why the design of the Lisgar GO train station allowed for that third track to be added right upfront. The people of northwest Mississauga look forward to another

transit ribbon-cutting for the third track on the Milton line.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr. Michael A. Brown: It's with great pleasure that I rise today in the House to speak about the significant initiatives for northern Ontario that were in yesterday's budget.

The government understands that we need to maintain strong, vibrant communities in the north to ensure Ontario's economic success, which is why this budget includes over \$508 million for strategic northern initiatives over the next four years.

Business education tax rates will be reduced more quickly in 85 northern municipalities. This will benefit more than 30,000 businesses, resulting in tax savings of over \$70 million. We are also increasing funding for the northern Ontario heritage fund, which will increase to \$100 million annually by the year 2011-12. These initiatives are just two of a number of important investments set out in the budget specifically for northern Ontario.

And because we realize that sound infrastructure attracts business, the budget will set out \$302 million over the next four years for new investment in northern highways. This is in addition to the record amount of \$557 million that we will be investing in northern highways in 2008-09.

This government knows what needs to be done in northern Ontario. We know that investing in businesses and working in partnership with northern Ontarians is the right way to move forward.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The underfunding of post-secondary education went on its uninterrupted path with the help of yesterday's budget.

Let me talk about the U of T as an example. A professor at the University of Toronto contacted me, concerned that the university will be dealing with a 4% cut in the budgets for all departments in the faculty of arts and sciences, with the projected cuts totalling 6% to 10% over the next four years. Ontario already has one of the worst faculty-student ratios in North America and is virtually last in per capita funding. New College students at the University of Toronto are facing a fee hike of more than \$1,000 next year. They've organized rallies, sit-ins, protests—all ignored by the Premier and this government.

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And to believe that yesterday, the Premier told me to look for solutions in the budget. I looked, and this government is spending only \$200 million more this year than last year on the entire provincial budget. That is a 0.002% increase in the budget. That is less than one half of one half of a penny on the dollar. Premier, with half of half of a penny, you won't help the University of Toronto or any college or university. With half of half of a penny,

you will be able to do less than half of the half you promised and none of what students actually need.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Mike Colle: Yesterday's budget shows us that the Ontario that we love is moving forward again. Our bold investment in public transit is one of the reasons I'm proud of yesterday's people's budget. There is \$497 million for public transit in the GTA, including \$293 million for Yonge subway capital improvements and \$7.1 million for a head start on Toronto's Transit City plan. One of the proposed Transit City projects is the Eglinton Crosstown light rail route, which runs through my riding of Eglinton—Lawrence. Eglinton Avenue is the only east-west road that connects Peel region to Durham region, right through the heart of our great city. The Eglinton Crosstown LRT would have an estimated annual ridership of 53 million customers and would benefit business, traffic flow and the environment.

Across the province, we are investing, in this budget, over \$1 billion in municipal infrastructure, from roads and bridges to GO Transit, the TTC and public transit authorities across this great province.

As former chair of the TTC, I know how important investing in public transit is for our city, our environment, our economy and the future clean air that our grandchildren will breathe. Unlike Mr. Harris, who in 1995 stopped the construction of the Eglinton subway, we are now building and working again for better transit, better air quality and a better city for all of us.

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Mr. Speaker, I rise sadly today with a lament for Ontario.

Farewell, oh sweet prosperity,
our long-sought-after friend.
For years you lived in our fine land
but now we can't contend.

Goodbye, oh job security,
the fruit of labour done.
They say that job retraining
is the new prize that we've won.

So long, oh public revenue
from corporate business levy.
The cost of public services
will certainly be heavy.

For any per cent of zero
is zero just the same,
And that's how many businesses
are likely to remain.

Oh free market, we will miss you;
have a lovely time out west.
The government will take your place,
content to be 10th best.

Au revoir, oh innovation
 with our best brains you'll go too,
 Alongside our leaving workers
 with wages to pursue.

Oh golden age of affluence,
 oh dreams of milk and honey,
 Why would you stay in such a place
 that takes your hard-earned money?

Oh former strong economy
 in such a fragile state,
 Your obituary's just released
 in budget 2008.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: I rise in the House today to highlight some of the fantastic investments, set out in yesterday's budget, that this government is making in Ontario's health care system. I rise today with personal ties to this government's advances in health care through my husband, Dr. Richard Upeniaks; my sister, Dr. Sara Pendergast; and my brother, Dr. Patrick Pendergast.

Yesterday's budget proposed an investment of \$40.4 billion in Ontario's health care sector in 2008-09, a 37.5% increase since 2003-04. From this \$40.4 billion, this government will invest in hiring 9,000 nurses by 2011-12. We will hire over 2,500 more personal support workers for long-term-care homes over the next three years. We will invest in more MRI machines. We will provide funding for more general surgeries. We are investing in a chronic disease prevention and maintenance strategy, starting with diabetes. The list of investments goes on and on but the objectives are simple: We will improve access to health care, shorten wait times and continue to promote preventive health measures. St. Mary's hospital in Kitchener now boasts cardiac care door-to-balloon times 20 minutes below the benchmark. Less than 10% of US hospitals can meet that standard. We refuse to sacrifice our doctors, nurses and health care professionals. Let's not move backwards to a time of closed hospitals. Let's move—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member's time is up. The member from Huron-Bruce.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: The budget that was presented yesterday has plenty of good news for Ontario's rural communities. Within the budget, we see many opportunities for this government to work with rural communities and ensure that they have the right tools they need to succeed and thrive. Rural Ontario will benefit from the share of the \$400 million in 2007-08 and it will build and repair municipal roads and bridges.

A second key investment is the \$450 million from the municipal infrastructure investment initiative, which will go towards priority capital projects. We're making it easier for students from rural and remote areas to go to

college or university by providing \$27 million over three years for a distance grant, which will help with travel costs. This will keep our youth in rural areas so that they can build their businesses and raise their families.

There's an additional \$30 million over four years to enhance broadband, and this investment brings our total investment to \$40 million for Rural Connections.

You can see from just a few of the initiatives that were set out in the budget that this government is investing in what rural Ontario needs. This government recognizes the unique challenges that rural Ontario faces. The initiatives that were set out in yesterday's budget will help to address these challenges. We will work towards a strong and vibrant future for rural Ontario.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Michael Prue: I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): The standing committee on regulations and private bills presents the committee's report as follows:

Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr3, An Act respecting St. Andrew's Congregation of the United Church of Canada at Toronto;

Bill Pr4, An Act to revive 872440 Ontario Inc.;

Bill Pr6, An Act to revive 71056 Ontario Limited.

Your committee further recommends that the fees and the actual cost of printing and all stages be remitted on Bill Pr3, An Act respecting St. Andrew's Congregation of the United Church of Canada at Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 62(c), the supplementary estimates 2007-08 of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and the Ministry of Transportation before the standing committee on estimates are reported back to the House, as they were not selected by the committee for consideration and are deemed to be received and concurred in.

Report deemed adopted.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received the report on intended appointments dated March 26, 2008, of the standing committee on government agencies. Pursuant to standing order 106(e)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SUPPLY ACT, 2008
LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2008

Mr. Duncan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 45, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008 / Projet de loi 45, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2008.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The minister for a short statement? No.

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EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT
(ORGAN DONATION EDUCATION), 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION
(ÉDUCATION SUR
LE DON D'ORGANES)

Mr. Levac moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 46, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to education on organ donation / Projet de loi 46, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation à l'égard de l'éducation sur le don d'organes.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement?

Mr. Dave Levac: The bill, if accepted, amends the Education Act and requires school boards to include education on the importance of organ donation in the curriculum of students in the senior division, such that every student, subject to certain expectations, who receives their OSSD or equivalent accreditation will have learned the importance of organ donation.

In Canada, there are fewer than 14 donors per one million people. With this expanded knowledge, students can learn that everyone can play a role in reducing these needless deaths, which cost approximately 250 lives in Canada each year, and help over 4,000 others suffering

from related organ failure or injury by donating their organs to transplant.

GRAND AVENUE HOLDINGS
LTD. ACT, 2008

Mr. Ruprecht moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr2, An Act to revive Grand Avenue Holdings Ltd.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 84, this bill stands referred to the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Michael Bryant: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice in respect of the standing committee on public accounts.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Michael Bryant: I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House dated December 11, 2007, while the House is in session during the months of March, April, May and June 2008, the standing committee on public accounts may meet on Thursdays until 1 p.m.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Agreed to.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On behalf of the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today Peggy Taillon, her son and a new Ontarian, Devlin Taillon, and Denis Taillon. Welcome today.

On behalf of the member for Northumberland–Quinte West, we'd like to welcome today in the west gallery his guests, Ms. Sherry French and Mr. Paul Gillespie.

On behalf of the member for Rainy River, we'd like to welcome the following guests to the gallery today: Alana Kapel from the North-South Partnership for Children, Linda Nothing-Chaplin from the North-South Partnership for Children, Jack Lapointe from the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation, Jacob Ostaman from KI First Nation and John Cutfeet from KI First Nation. Welcome.

On behalf of the member for Davenport, we'd like to welcome the family of Magali Toy, who is one of our pages: her mother, Leslie Toy; Jim Gronau, her father; Augusta Jones, a friend; and Hannah Barnard, a friend as well. Welcome today.

On behalf of the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook, we'd like to welcome visiting friends and family members of our page Michael Kushnir: Brenda Kushnir, Michael's mother, and Jim and Kathleen Thoms, his grandparents. Welcome to Queen's Park today as well.

ORAL QUESTIONS

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is for the Premier. Premier, in your budget you speak to the need to expand apprenticeships and launch workers into new, well-paying careers. Yet yesterday, when the member for Simcoe–Grey, Mr. Wilson, asked you about the ratio of tradesmen to apprentices currently in place in Ontario—three tradesmen to one apprentice or essentially three teachers for every student—you refused to answer. This ratio is turning away thousands of apprentices in the electrical, plumbing, sheet metal and carpentry trades. Will the Premier make an effort to answer the question today? Will he change this discriminatory ratio?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: First of all, let me say that I'm pleased to receive the question and, to be very specific, to look into the matter. My understanding is that these ratios are set by special advisory committees. We will certainly take a very close look at it because our intention is to fill in the skills gap. As you know, we have Ontarians who are losing their jobs today through factors beyond their control. We have invested in a dramatic way in 20,000 workers to ensure they have access for the first time to long-term training, and beyond that, to take our annual influx of apprentices from 26,000 to 32,500.

Obviously what the leader of the official opposition is talking about would, if it were workable, help us resolve this skills gap.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I think it's easily workable, and we would urge the Premier to move on it. He likes to talk about the money his government is spending on apprenticeship training and the increase in the number of apprentices, but the reality is, there's no point in pouring money into apprenticeship programs if the current hiring ratio is keeping thousands of apprentices from actually getting a job in a trade.

In keeping with all of the other poor economic indicators that we keep hearing about, other than Prince Edward Island, Ontario has the most stringent electrical trade ratios in Canada. Ontario spends thousands of dollars training these apprentices and they turn around and move to other provinces like Alberta, where the ratio is 1 to 1. In every province west of Ontario, the ratio is 1 to 1.

It's a simple solution that doesn't require any new tax dollars. What's behind your reluctance, Premier? Does it have anything to do with your debts to certain unions?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I have said that we will take a look at this. There may very well be something there that we can and should do in order to ensure that we are

meeting the demand for skills. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business tells us that in 2007 there were 100,000 jobs that were available for at least a period of four months which weren't being taken, predominantly because people who were available to take those jobs didn't have the necessary skill sets. That's why we have about 100,000 apprentices—110,000 apprentices, in fact—who are being trained today. When we first formed the government, there were 19,000 new apprentices being brought online every year. We want to take it up to 32,500 now.

Again, I say to the leader of the official opposition: He's made a suggestion. I think it's reasonable, and we will take a look at it

1400

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: We'll look forward to an early announcement.

A bit of a different tack: Yesterday's budget said that the goal of the \$1.5-billion skills-to-jobs action plan was to give unemployed workers the skills to get a job in industries that were growing and experiencing labour shortages. There is an article in today's *Globe* that says your government officials have indicated—I'm quoting from the paper—that “the strategy will not require individuals to study in specific high-demand areas.” Premier, what exactly, then, is the money being spent on? If they're not being trained in an area where there is a labour shortage in Ontario, aren't we just spending the money on training unemployed people who will then pack up and get a job in Alberta?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I have a great deal more faith in the wisdom of individual Ontarians to pursue the kind of training that is going to lead to good jobs for them and their families. What the leader of the official opposition is proposing, to take it to its logical conclusion, is that we put in place some kind of a regulatory process that determines which industries are specifically going to grow and would hold employment opportunities for some and which we should not be funding.

I can tell you, if you are 42 years of age and you've lost your job in forestry or lost your job in manufacturing, you've got grocery bills that you've got to pay, you've got rent or you've got mortgage payments that you've got to make, when it comes to considering what kind of a job training opportunity you're going to pursue, you're going to be very, very sober-minded about making that kind of decision. I place my confidence in the ability of Ontarians to make that kind of a call. It's not a call for our government to make.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is for the Premier. Four years ago, your minister tearfully promised a revolution in long-term care, plus you promised an additional \$6,000 in funding per resident in personal care. Now, not only have those promises been broken, but then your minister further insulted these residents by

saying that he was going to wear a diaper to see if the product was appropriate.

Premier, the problem is not the diaper, the incontinence product; it is the fact that staff don't have enough time for preventive incontinence care, and this budget from yesterday isn't going to help that situation. I ask you, how are our homes going to be able to maintain the staff and the programs they currently have if there's no increase in the operating per diem for inflation, wage adjustments and other operating cost pressures?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman: The honourable member was away last week when I was—

Interjections.

Hon. George Smitherman: With respect, I was simply going to say that I want to make sure that she understands from me that when I did speak in the scrum about incontinence products, it was with a view towards the product. I meant absolutely nothing but to address this in a dignified way, having witnessed for seven months the final conclusion of my father's life, where he was in need of a very high level of care.

When the honourable member was in the government, they eliminated a 2.25 minimum standard of care that was on the books. With the investments in the budget yesterday, we'll be bringing that standard to three hours per day of purchased care for our long-term-care residents, evidence of substantial enhancement on that point.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: This minister probably should move over and give the job to somebody else. You have had almost five years, and you still hearken back to when we were there or to when the NDP were there. The reality is, your announcement yesterday only increases the average hours of care—actual care, not including vacation pay and maternity time—from 2.6 to 2.7 hours of care, and not the three hours that was requested.

I say to you, Minister: Why did you not recognize that our seniors today demand more care? There are more instances of violence and abuse, and 68% of them suffer from dementia or other forms of cognitive impairment. Why didn't you give them the three hours, but only the 2.7 in actual worked hours?

Hon. George Smitherman: I appreciate, as always, the observations from the member from "Do as I say, not as I did," but the reality is that on her watch, they eliminated standard of care.

We've made investments over the last four years that have added 9.55 million hours of additional care in our long-term-care homes. Through the good work of the Minister of Finance yesterday, we were able to profile for the long-term-care residents in the province of Ontario a plan to add 2,500 additional personal support workers and 2,000 nurses over the next three years.

In addition, I can only say that the party that calls for a \$5-billion reduction in revenue is in a very peculiar place to be calling for sustained investments. I think that Ontarians can do the math, and that's why Ontarians

have concluded that it's better for health care to have Liberals over here than Progressive Conservatives.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I would certainly disagree with that assessment. You know, this is the minister who promised the revolution, this is the minister who promised \$6,000 in additional personal care, and this is the minister who now has decided not to respond to the request for an average three hours of personal care per resident, even though the needs of the seniors in these homes are increasing. You simply don't listen.

I want to talk about the money you allocated yesterday for those positions. We agree that money is needed. However, what you have done, one more time, is you have made specific allocations instead of flexible funding for the homes to hire the staff that they need, such as, in some cases, activity aides and food service workers.

Minister, as you know, there is a nursing shortage. I ask you today: If these homes cannot hire the 2,000 nurses, will they need to return the money to you, or can they provide that additional money for other positions?

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to say first off that when the honourable member had the opportunity in the discussions about Bill 140 to vote on whether we should add a minimum standard of care, she did not vote in favour of it. We have her own record from the time that she was in a government that eliminated such minimum standards, and we contrast that to our record.

Firstly, we're consistent on the point that if you want to make investments in health care, you have to have the resources. They're inconsistent. They want to cut \$5 billion in revenue and they want magically to be able to address every spending requirement. In fact, we have letters from almost all of them asking for an additional half-billion dollars in funding for long-term care this year.

Our record is clear: 9.55 million additional hours of care so far, and through the investments made possible by our budget and by our plan, the additions of thousands more bedside care providers, because we believe fundamentally that enhancing the quality of care in long-term care depends on investment, investment made possible by resources that they like to pretend about but are in favour of eliminating.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Premier, regarding the McGuinty government's shortchange budget: It's clear there's no plan to sustain manufacturing jobs in this budget. It's also clear there is no plan to provide quality care for seniors living in long-term-care homes and nursing homes. My question is this: Where is the McGuinty government's plan to address these pressing challenges? It's certainly not in the budget.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman: To the contrary, the funding line for long-term-care homes sees a 5.7% increase, from \$2.682 billion to \$2.836 billion. This will allow not only for ongoing support for those expenditures which are already made in the form of base budget increase, but

this will also be an increase in the comfort allowance. We're very proud to announce that this will allow for 864 additional personal support workers to be added to our long-term-care repertoire this year. This enhances the quality of care. And further, we've laid out a plan that will build on this: a total of 2,500 additional personal support workers and 2,000 additional nurses, adding millions of hours of additional care to enhance the quality of care that is there.

I remind the member that when he was in government, that government's standard was 2.25 hours. Through our investments made possible in this budget, we've achieved 3.0, heading towards 3.25.

1410

Mr. Howard Hampton: A child in elementary school can do the division. What you have added is six minutes more of nursing care or personal care. That's all that our seniors are receiving in our homes for the aged. And that's why this is a shortchange budget. Money from the current year's surplus is being shovelled out the door by the Minister of Finance in a last-minute fashion. But there is no plan—no plan for our seniors and no plan for manufacturing jobs.

But I want to ask the Premier: Where is the plan for affordable regulated child care? Where is the plan to address poverty in Ontario? It certainly isn't in the budget either.

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to say to the honourable member that perhaps he depends upon elementary math, but we think it's very noteworthy that through the investments we've been able to make in Ontario's health care system to date, we've dramatically enhanced the standard of care in our long-term-care homes. Some 9.55 million hours of additional care is not something to be sneezed at. It has meant 6,000 additional workers at the bedside, enhancing the quality of care for our long-term-care residents, and through the excellent plan laid out by the Minister of Finance and our government yesterday, we will see Ontario moving towards a standard of care that allows for, on average, 3.25 hours of paid care every single day in our long-term-care homes. This will mean more than 4,000 additional individuals helping to deliver care and, dare I say, love alongside that care.

I remind the honourable member that he too has a record. When he was part of an NDP government, that number was 2.25; we're headed to 3.25, and that's as a result of a very good budget yesterday.

Mr. Howard Hampton: With people in our homes for the aged growing older and more frail than ever, maybe the standard needs to change. The only people who haven't figured that out are the McGuinty government, who think six more minutes is some kind of plan.

But I want to ask a further question about this smoke-and-mirrors, shortchange budget. Just a short time ago, the Minister of Finance brought in municipal leaders and said, "Oh, any budget surplus money is going to go to municipalities." Well, then the books were opened yesterday, and there is not going to be any money for

municipalities next year or the year after. So since there is no plan for infrastructure support for municipalities, because there's no foreseeable future surplus, can the Premier tell us, when is he going to fill in the municipal infrastructure cracks that are obviously in this budget?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Jim Watson: It's obvious that the leader of the NDP did not read the budget, because this government has announced substantial new dollars for infrastructure for municipalities. In fact it was a billion-dollar announcement. Maybe to the NDP a billion dollars is not a lot, but let me read you two quotes from two mayors. David Miller, mayor of Toronto: "This budget is very good news. It invests where we need investment." The mayor of my home town, Larry O'Brien: "I think the province took a well-balanced, sensible approach."

Time and time again, we've heard from AMO and other municipal leaders, including the mayor of Mississauga, that this is a well-received budget, for the simple reason that for years, under the two previous governments, they ignored the municipal sector, they ignored infrastructure. This government put a billion dollars into municipal infrastructure this year alone, and we're very proud of that.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Premier: The question remains, where is the plan?

But I also want to ask about the 200,000 Ontarians who lost their manufacturing and resource jobs and how they are also being shortchanged by the McGuinty government, a McGuinty government that rejects a 50% Buy Ontario strategy—meanwhile the United States has a 60% Buy America strategy—and workers who were looking for some kind of incentive to keep manufacturing in Ontario. New Democrats outlined a plan for Buy Ontario and a plan for a refundable manufacturing investment tax credit. I want to ask the Premier: Where is the Premier's plan?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: First of all, as the leader of the NDP knows, of the billions of dollars that we're putting in the public transit sector, fully 82% of those dollars will be devoted to the Ontario economy to create Ontario jobs—82%—so he can hold that up against the 60% buy USA program any time he wants.

We are helping manufacturing, in particular, in a very practical and pragmatic and immediate way. He will know that his colleagues to his right, physically and philosophically, have asked that we simply cut taxes in a dramatic fashion. I can tell you that what we've done is something that is actually going to benefit manufacturers in an immediate sense. When we retroactively eliminate the capital tax to January 2007, as soon as we pass this budget, we can get \$190 million out the door by way of rebates. That's real help when manufacturers need it, right now.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Once again, the response of the McGuinty government is a one-time dollop of money. What manufacturers are saying is, they need a strategy which is going to lead to further investment and allow them to survive.

I also want to ask about the fact that the Premier's jobs plan seems to be a jobs training plan—except, it's only a jobs training plan for 20,000 unemployed workers. I want to ask the Premier, what about the other 180,000 manufacturing and resource workers who've lost their jobs? What happens to them, since there are only retraining funds for 20,000 workers?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The leader of the NDP does know that, in fact, we're ahead 450,000 net new jobs. Most of the folks who are losing their jobs are finding other jobs. What we want to do is create better opportunities for them so that rather than taking a job that helps them get by, they get a job that will help them get ahead.

In the past, what we have done through successive governments of all political stripes is urge people who've lost a job to take the first and next job that becomes available. What we're saying is—and this is not an easy thing for a 43-year-old to do—if you're prepared to go back to school for a year or two, we want to create the long-term training opportunity for you to do that.

If it costs us \$25,000, for example, to ensure that we help provide you with the support you need for your tuition, for your transportation costs and for other costs associated with pursuing that training, we will be there for you. We think \$20,000, given our history in this province, is dramatic. It's extraordinary. It's exactly what many of our workers are looking for.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The question was about the 180,000 laid-off manufacturing and resource sector workers who are not going to be covered by your training plan. What happens to them? The mayor of Windsor suggested last week that maybe they need to get a direct flight to fly out to Saskatoon or Alberta. He, at least, is thinking of a plan.

My question to the Premier, again, is this: What is your plan for the 180,000 resource and manufacturing workers who have lost their jobs and who are not going to be covered by your \$20,000 retraining plan?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I find it passing strange that the leader of the NDP would not be supportive of a program, in times of fiscal constraint, whereby we invest in our single greatest natural resource: our people.

I can't believe that the leader of the NDP does not support a program that puts confidence in, faith in, our hope and aspirations in, the people of Ontario: 20,000 long-term training opportunities at a cost of some \$355 million. In addition to that, we are taking our complement of apprenticeships from originally 19,000 to 32,500 people. We now have 100,000 more young people going on to college and university. We have 10,000 more young people graduating from high school.

Anybody who takes a careful look at our policies, particularly in the face of an economic challenge, under-

stands that we have confidence in, and we continue to place faith in, the people of Ontario.

1420

PROVINCIAL DEBT

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: My question is to the Minister of Finance. According to your budget of yesterday, your government will have increased our provincial debt by over \$19 billion during your mandate. The total debt has gone up by \$19 billion. This government keeps announcing new buildings, new highways, new infrastructure, but instead of paying for these projects, his government keeps placing mortgages on them. That means that future taxpayers—our children and grandchildren—will have to pay off the principal plus the interest on this new debt. Financial consultants advise the average citizen, the homeowner, “If you receive money, pay off some of your mortgage.” Why don't you take this advice and use some of the extra \$5 billion you got this year from the taxpayers to pay off some of our mortgage?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We are paying off \$600 million of provincial debt. That's in the budget. I'll remind the member that they borrowed every single cent of their tax cuts which is on our debt, which we're paying interest on. We just don't think that's an appropriate public policy.

I would also remind the member that since this government took office, both the GDP-to-net-debt ratio and the GDP to accumulated deficits have gone down dramatically. That has been cited by bond rating agencies, and it speaks to a balanced approach to the challenges in our economy today that sees us making proper investments in public services that are essential to the people of Ontario. It sees us paying down debt and, yes, targeting tax cuts to help our manufacturing and resource economies.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Mr. Speaker, while he may be paying down the debt by \$600 million, he's adding \$5.5 billion of new debt to the books this year. Yesterday in his statement to this Legislature, he bragged about this being his third consecutive balanced budget and that they are projecting into the future six budgets altogether—a feat not matched since 1908. I ask the minister: Would he not agree that if he were keeping the books the same way as they have been for the last 100 years and not changed them most recently, and he was operating on a cash basis, instead of having a \$600-million surplus he would have an over \$4-billion deficit?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: It was actually the Accounting Standards Board of Canada that changed the rules, and we're happy signatories to those changes. I would remind the member that in addition to paying down debt, we are using year-end money and we are using surpluses to invest in infrastructure, which is extremely important to the economy: roads, bridges, sewers, transit, housing. I'd ask the member: What would he not do in that circumstance?

I'd finally remind the member that in his last year of office, the debt-to-GDP ratio was 25.2%. It is down by almost a third to 17.6%, and we are targeting a rate of 16.2% by 2010-11. That is the way governments should be properly run: invest in people, invest in infrastructure, balance budgets, reduce debt and lower business taxes.

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

Mr. Howard Hampton: A question to the Premier: The Premier will know that there are several members of the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation here today, and Ardoch First Nation. Under the McGuinty government, First Nation leaders have been forced to defend their aboriginal rights and traditional lands in court and through peaceful protests. The response of the McGuinty government has been to put the leaders of these First Nation communities in jail. Why? Because the McGuinty government has failed to live up to its constitutional obligation to consult and accommodate these First Nations.

My question to the Premier is this: If there is a new relationship with First Nations, as maintained by your government, why do you continue to put First Nation leaders in jail when they're simply standing up for their constitutional rights?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm going to take the first part of this question and give the supplementary to my colleague. I want to take this because, frankly, I find that what the leader of the NDP is suggesting is offensive. There is an independent judiciary; there is an independent judicial process. The result of that process is not something that is dictated, governed, influenced in any particular way by our government. And he knows better than that.

For him—I mean, especially as the former Attorney General—to continue to insist that somehow we have manipulated the judiciary to result in the incarceration of some particular Ontarians is completely wrong, and he should not continue to make those offensive kinds of allegations. They are unbecoming.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Premier: Today's date, you received a letter from representatives of those First Nations. Here is the point that they make. In both cases, the McGuinty government gave permits to mining companies without consulting and accommodating the First Nations. In both cases, when First Nations were forced to take legal action and peaceful protest—in the face of this—government lawyers representing Ontario supported the mining industry's legal manoeuvres at every stage. It is those legal manoeuvres which have resulted in the incarceration of the leadership.

Now, Premier, the First Nations have put a very reasonable proposal to you: "We call on you to support the unconditional release of our leaders and negotiators. We also call on you to accept the proposal made to you by Ardoch First Nation "on January 11, 2008, and by KI on January 17, 2008...." Will you do that, Premier? Or is

it your intention to continue to support the legal manoeuvres of the mining companies?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. Michael Bryant: Not only, obviously, did the government not have a hand in their incarceration, but the Attorney General's agent, the crown attorney, opposed their incarceration. We were against the incarceration. You've surely seen the transcript. I know the member has seen the transcript and, as a former Attorney General, he will know that the crown would take a position in court to this effect.

That's why this government doubled the budget for aboriginal affairs in the budget of yesterday. That's why, in fact, since Dalton McGuinty became the Premier of Ontario, the aboriginal affairs ministry budget tripled. That's why this government entered into an agreement that saw \$3 billion going to First Nations over the next 25 years. There is a new relationship with First Nations, Metis and Inuit people, and I look forward to working with leaders in the future in order to forge an even better one.

TRANSIT FUNDING

Mr. Charles Sousa: My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Since 1996, travel in the GTA has increased by more than 20%, with approximately eight million automobile trips made on an average day. With Mississauga now recognized as Canada's sixth-largest and fastest-growing major city, I believe that the increases on Mississauga roads exceed the 20% average. That means more cars, more congestion and the need for greater public transit.

I understand that yesterday's budget included funding for the second round of projects recommended by Metrolinx; I believe the first round occurred in the fall economic statement. We are pleased by the work of Metrolinx and by Mississauga's representation on the board by Her Worship Hazel McCallion.

However, recently the Leader of the Opposition has commented on how money will not start to flow until 2011 for any projects, and how the public will not see results of this in the foreseeable future. My question: Would the minister clarify this and highlight for the residents of my community when this money will in fact flow and how it will be a benefit to them?

1430

Hon. James J. Bradley: Thank you for a question from somebody who uses public transit very often.

I want to say that this government has delivered on an important platform commitment by establishing Metrolinx, which is a GTA-wide seamless transit system. They have two lists of projects for more than \$800 million. I'm not sure where the leader of the official opposition got his statistics. He has the disadvantage of being outside of this House—that may be it—but he has them wrong.

I want to say that what this actually means for all Mississauga residents is the development of transit corri-

dors on both Dundas and Hurontario, with \$26.5 million flowing by June 30; and funding for the Mississauga Transitway hub, which will connect Mississauga Transit with the TTC through a \$39-million investment expansion of the GO Transit rail fleet along the GO Lakeshore corridor with an investment of \$60 million for 20 new bi-level passenger coaches, which means more passengers and less crowding.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary, the member from Hamilton Mountain.

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: Transit is a big concern for my constituents of Hamilton Mountain, as well as for all Hamilton residents. We welcomed the announcement of the Move Ontario 2020 initiative last summer by the Premier. We were pleased to have seen Metrolinx given the responsibility of implementing these projects.

It is great to see how there was funding from yesterday's budget and from December's fall economic statement to help the residents of Mississauga get out of their cars and into public transit, but I would like to know what is being committed to help my constituents of Hamilton Mountain, along with all of the residents of the city of Hamilton. I'm hoping the Minister of Transportation can inform the residents of Hamilton how funding from the fall economic statement and from yesterday's budget will benefit us in Hamilton.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Transit is a McGuinty government priority. Through yesterday's budget, we have committed to funding all the projects recommended by Metrolinx. This includes funding for the James Street North GO station in Hamilton—the gateway to Niagara, I might add. Once completed, this station is going to be the gateway for GO service to Niagara.

Other improvements that I am sure the member is interested in include the creation of a bus rapid transit A-line along the Upper James corridor, which will include service to the Hamilton International Airport, with an investment of \$12.4 million flowing by June 30 this year. We've also invested \$17.4 million into bus rapid transit improvements to the B-line on the King-Main corridor, funding which will also flow by June 30 of this year. These are improvements that the residents of Hamilton will find will be very good for them and for those who visit Hamilton. The city officials, I know, will be delighted to hear that news.

SKILLS TRAINING

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is for the Minister of Finance. In January, Prime Minister Harper announced \$357 million in the Community Development Trust to retrain Ontario workers. On page 69 of Ontario's budget yesterday, the minister says that the federal government money will be used to "include new skills training centres to provide up-to-date training for Ontario's unemployed workers who require skills upgrading." Can the minister confirm to this House that the entire \$355 million allocated in the budget for the Second Career

strategy is actually repackaged federal money from the Community Development Trust?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: What I can acknowledge is that, indeed, the community development money is in the entire training package. As I said in my statement to the media yesterday and I said today, it represents about a quarter of the overall investment and it shows what you can do when you partner with the federal government. It shows what you can do. That's why this morning I asked Mr. Flaherty to put aside the rhetoric; let us meet. We don't agree with Mr. Flaherty and the leadership he has taken over there in terms of corporate tax cuts, but we all have to sit down and work together. That's what Ontarians want. We'll work with them for the betterment of our economy and the people of this province.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The minister moved money from right to left, repackaged the money and gave the federal government's program a nice new name.

Let's look at the facts. The federal government invested \$357 million for retraining in Ontario in January; yesterday's budget included \$355 million for Second Career training. It's unbelievable that the finance minister would spend so much time in his speech yesterday condemning and picking a fight with the federal government, when one of his major budget claims is being wholly funded by the federal government.

What is his share of the partnership? And can he tell this House why, after he criticized the federal government, he repackaged their money and then used it for his own Second Career strategy initiative?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I again want to acknowledge the federal contribution to our skills-to-jobs training strategy.

I might ask the member opposite if she would make representations to the federal government to see if they will partner with us to make sure Ontarians get fairly treated for employment insurance. I wonder if she might partner with us to see if the federal government will give equal per capita health care funding for Ontario today, instead of 2014. I wonder if she and her colleagues opposite will join us in seeing if the federal government will partner with us to make sure Ontario municipalities aren't called pothole fixers, but are treated the same way municipalities in other parts of the country are. Will she join us? Will she stand up for Ontario?

LOW-INCOME ONTARIANS

Mr. Michael Prue: Mr. Premier, can you indicate when Ontario's poorest families, those who are on ODSP and Ontario Works, can expect to receive the paltry 2% increase that was in yesterday's budget?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The ODSP and OW money will flow in the fall of this year. The computer system, as the member knows, causes us difficulty in getting that money out. But it is the intention that that increase will flow by this fall.

Mr. Michael Prue: As I can take from your answer, this government has not only shortchanged our neediest families—there's no end to the clawback, there's a paltry 20 cents a day for poor schoolchildren to eat at school—but now we're being told that this lousy 2% won't even happen until the fall. So in fact, they're only getting a 1% increase. Can the government not implement that increase—if it's only going to be 2%, can you not do it today?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Number one, I would remind the member that this government has increased these benefits by 27% since taking office. Number two, I would remind the member opposite that each year these benefits flow in the fall, so it is an annual increase year over year in the fall.

Our investments yesterday, whether you're talking about investments in dental care for children, \$100 million for social housing renewal, or doubling the amount of money for student nutrition, represent a down payment on our goal to reduce poverty, particularly for children.

There is more to do, and this government is committed to doing more over the course of its mandate.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Affordable housing is a priority issue for many communities across Ontario, including those in my riding of Ottawa Centre. I'm continually approached by community organizations that are working diligently to advance affordable housing solutions for the people of Ottawa Centre. We know that low-income families depend on affordable housing.

I had the chance to tour Ottawa Community Housing to see first-hand why strong and significant investment in affordable housing must be a priority for our government. In that regard, can the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing enlighten us as to what progress has been made in addressing the short supply of affordable housing units in the Ottawa area?

1440

Hon. Jim Watson: I was very pleased when Minister Duncan announced in yesterday's budget that \$100 million will be going into affordable housing programs throughout the province of Ontario. In our hometown, the city of Ottawa, \$8.2 million will be delivered to the city of Ottawa by March 31.

I want to commend the honourable member for his advocacy on behalf of those people looking for affordable housing. In particular, I want to point out a very exciting project that is taking place, and I suspect that ground will be broken this year: the Beaver Barracks project next to the YMCA on Argyle Avenue. That's part of the affordable housing program signed by the previous federal government and the McGuinty government. We look forward to doing even more with affordable housing advocates with that \$100 million. I thank the member for his advocacy on behalf of the people of Ottawa.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I would like to thank the minister for his response. I know the city of Ottawa appreciates

the support. But from meeting with councillors in my riding, I know they continue to face budget pressures. From infrastructure pressures to transit, Ottawa faces tough decisions every day, just like this provincial government does.

Minister, I know the previous Tory provincial government slashed taxes, closed hospitals and dumped the problems on municipalities. They took the easy way out instead of rolling up their sleeves and putting in the hard work to build partnerships that benefit Ontarians. How is this government's approach benefiting Ottawa?

Hon. Jim Watson: We're back in the partnership business with municipalities throughout the province of Ontario after years of the previous government picking fights with municipality after municipality. I'm very proud to be part of a cabinet and a team of government members that has invested, this year alone, \$27 million to upgrade transit services in the city of Ottawa. Ottawa will receive \$36 million in provincial gas tax funds and \$10.1 million in OMPF funding.

As a result of the Premier's announcement at the AMO conference in Ottawa, we began the uploading of the Ontario drug plan, and that will save the city of Ottawa and its property taxpayers \$15 million this year. Eventually, over the course of the next three years, when ODSP is uploaded—and I know the opposition doesn't know the word "upload" because they're very good at downloading—this will save the city of Ottawa \$60 million. That's in addition to uploading land ambulance costs at 50-50 and public health costs at 75%. We're back in the partnership business with the city of Ottawa and all municipalities in this province.

DEVELOPMENT FEES

Mr. Toby Barrett: To the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs: Minister, as you know, builders on the Grand River are having their projects held up by the Haudenosaunee Development Institute unless they pay money to HDI. According to the Criminal Code of Canada, "extortion" is defined as one who "with intent to obtain anything, by threats, accusations, menaces or violence induces or attempts to induce any person ... to do anything or cause anything to be done." Minister, do these actions by HDI not fit the legal definition of "extortion" as in the Criminal Code?

Hon. Michael Bryant: The good news is that it's not MPPs in the Legislature who interpret the Criminal Code; it's police and prosecutors who interpret the Criminal Code. So I will not do so, and I'm surprised that the member would continue to do so, notwithstanding the Ipperwash commission findings.

One of the untold stories about what is happening in that part of the province is the work that is being done by MPP Dave Levac. Not only is Mr. Levac bringing the community together through meetings that I've spoken of before, but he's constantly on the telephone with municipal leaders, with business leaders in the community. He's talking with Six Nations; he's talking with every-

body. He's trying to come up with solutions, something that that member should be trying to do as well.

Mr. Toby Barrett: The police are not laying charges. Spring is upon us, the frost is out of the ground, and builders have their employees and bulldozers ready to go. These builders don't know how to handle HDI. It seems to them like a no-win situation. If they pay the application fee of up to \$7,000, what are the subsequent development fees? If they pay those fees, who do they rely on? Who is going to let them know whether they own their land or not, and whether they will be protested or not by perhaps yet another native group? We know the police are not laying charges.

My question to you is, what is your government doing about this extortion by HDI?

Hon. Michael Bryant: I will say this about that: The member knows, or ought to know, that the only development fees that ought to be paid by anyone in this province are those that one would pay to the local municipality. In fact, if there's anybody who suggests that any other fees ought to be paid, it is our recommendation that they absolutely, obviously, not pay it.

Secondly, what are we going to do? We have to bring a solution to this 200-year-old dispute between the federal government on the one hand and Six Nations on the other hand. That's why the province is at the table doing that. That's why I was speaking with Chief McNaughton and Chief Montour on this very subject on Monday, and I'll be speaking with them again later this afternoon on that, as I continue to speak to the mayor of Brantford as well. We'll keep on trying to find solutions and we won't give up.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France G  linas: My question is for the Premier, and it is also about yesterday's shortchange budget. The Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors believes this budget means that residents in long-term care will receive an extra five minutes of daily hands-on care. Is an extra five minutes of care a day the revolution in long-term care promised by the McGuinty Liberals?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman: I'm pleased to have a chance to answer this question again and to repeat some of the numbers, since that's at the heart of budgets and at the heart of our initiative with respect to long-term care. Everybody agrees that enhancing the standards of long-term care is important. The difference between us and those parties is that we're showing it by actual investment. Some 9.55 million hours of additional care had been added before yesterday's budget, and as a result of the initiatives over the next several years, we'll be adding nearly five million additional hours of care. This will take us from the standard at present of 2.94 hours per average paid care per day to 3.25, and will represent more than 4,500 additional workers providing care in the long-term-care environment. This builds on 6,000

additional workers who have been added to date and represents a very substantial budgetary increase as we enhance the circumstances for residents in our long-term-care homes.

M^{me} France G  linas: The Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors has also done the number crunching. I'll read a quote from Donna Rubin, the CEO of OANHSS: "We're slipping backward, not moving forward, and that's bitterly disappointing for the 76,000 long-term-care residents" and their families "who were expecting more."

Does the Premier think our loved ones in long-term care deserve better than five extra minutes of care?

Hon. George Smitherman: I think it's very important to have investments that also reflect our capacity from a health human resources and from a financial standpoint. It is not possible to flood the marketplace with opportunity in long-term care without stealing those workers from the home care sector. As an example, here's what Janet Lambert, the head of the Ontario Long-Term Care Association, said yesterday: "Overall, the budget represents a significant commitment to the sector in the context of the current economic realities." She further said, "We believe today's budget is a response to the voice of residents and families and a signal of the important role of long-term care in our health care system."

All across health care we've made investments which reflect the interdependency of different parts of the system and, accordingly, we're very proud that the investments we've made to date have added almost 10 million hours of care. We're going to continue to build on that to enhance the circumstances for residents in our long-term-care homes.

PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: My question is for the Minister of Research and Innovation. The people of Mississauga-Brampton South benefit greatly from the large amount of pharmaceutical production that takes place in my riding. Mississauga in particular has experienced incredible growth in our biotechnology and pharmaceutical centre, which doubled from 192 companies to well over 400 from 1990 to 2001. In fact, these companies employ more than 20,000 people and continue to be an important part of the economy.

1450

The global pharmaceutical market is estimated to be worth over \$534 billion a year. It provides high-paying jobs for families, develops life-saving medications and saves our health care system money through developing new preventive treatments. What is the Ministry of Research and Innovation doing to encourage the growth of this major research and manufacturing industry here in the province of Ontario?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my colleague the member for Mississauga-Brampton South. Her riding represents one of the largest concentrations of the biopharmaceutical industry, not only here in Ontario, but

throughout North America, and I want to thank her for her tireless advocacy for that industry.

I want you to know that our government believes in the importance of the biopharmaceutical industry and the fact that it is so research-intensive. It employs over 9,000 people in Ontario with some great-paying jobs. There are some 10,000 scientists, at some 25 academic and research hospitals across the province, who benefit from the biopharmaceutical industry and their investment of some \$550 million in R&D. We believe that is a wonderful industry that we can partner with. That's why I was so pleased in January to announce the \$150-million biopharmaceutical investment program, part of our \$1.15-billion Next Generation of Jobs Fund. It's driving good-paying jobs right here in Ontario.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Minister, some on the opposition benches take a negative view of Ontario's ability to compete in the global economy. I know, as a government, we don't have the luxury of being pessimistic. We believe in Ontario and its ability to compete. Can you please outline for the benefit of opposition members the positive steps we are taking through our biopharmaceutical strategy to build on our strengths, while investing in the future, to create jobs here in the province of Ontario?

Hon. John Wilkinson: Far be it from me to lecture that very unified caucus over there, but I find it passing strange that the leader of their party said when I announced this, "This is a bad approach to the economy"—but then what did the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Runciman, say when the federal budget came out? He said that he was impressed with the federal budget, which is filled with industry-specific investments, including the automotive, farming and fishing sectors, because he believes "it will position the country well for economic growth." It was a jewel in the crown. Who should we believe? The Minister of Research and Innovation, who stands by the biopharmaceutical industry and believes passionately—with people like Dr. Janet Rossant, who's the head of research at Sick Kids, who says, "Incentives like this new biopharmaceutical investment program will ensure that partnerships between industry and researchers in Ontario continue to build a strong knowledge-based economy that will create jobs and improve the health of our population."

We're very consistent on this side of the House. We believe in 21st-century—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

EASTERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. Premier, last year your candidates and colleagues campaigned throughout eastern Ontario on an ironclad promise to deliver \$80 million over the next four years, \$20 million a year beginning this year, for the eastern Ontario development fund. In yesterday's budget, there is not a mention of a single penny for it. The Eastern Ontario

Wardens' Caucus is counting on this funding. They were expecting this was an ironclad promise. They expect \$20 million now. Premier, why are you not keeping this promise?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Jim Watson: We're very proud of that commitment that we made in the budget. Number one, it doubles what the federal contribution was for eastern Ontario. Secondly, unlike your party, we actually believe in consulting local community leaders in eastern Ontario. We asked, through our eastern Ontario caucus, the eastern Ontario wardens and other municipal leaders, including the Municipalities United for a New Deal and the mayors from eastern Ontario, to come together with the proper criteria so that we could put together the best possible economic development package for eastern Ontario.

The previous government cancelled eastern Ontario economic development. We put it back in the budget.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The minister would know that the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus provided them with a very detailed proposal of what they need in that fund, and you promised that it would be in this budget. They submitted this proposal, but there's no money in this budget for the eastern Ontario development fund. You have ignored their wishes on the gas tax. You have ignored their wishes on this fund. If you're going to change the position today and indicate that yes, there is \$20 million this year, we'd love to hear about it, and the wardens of eastern Ontario counties would like to hear about it, because they want to know one thing: While they continue to insist that their fiscal condition has deteriorated under your regime, they want to know why you continue to insist on shortchanging people in eastern Ontario who need this assistance badly.

Hon. Jim Watson: It's passing strange: The same party that wants to cut \$5 billion through corporate taxes gets up on their feet and asks for more money for different parts of the province. It's the ultimate oxymoron. It's like jumbo shrimp or Progressive Conservative; you can't have it both ways. This is in the budget; it's under the Ministry of Economic Development. It's on page 40—four, zero. I'd encourage the member to look in the budget, page 40.

We've been out consulting with the wardens. We asked them for that report so that we could make sure we have the best possible advice from economic development officers, from the wardens, from the municipal leaders, from the business community. That money will be delivered to eastern Ontario. After the Conservative government cut the funding years ago, it's back on the radar screen under the leadership of our Premier.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is for the Minister of Housing, and it is a straightforward one: Why is there not one dollar in this budget for new-build affordable housing when there are 125,000 households waiting for it?

Hon. Jim Watson: The honourable member is correct: There's not one dollar in the budget; there's \$100 million in the budget. Let me just remind the member, the NDP talk a good line about affordable housing. In their last year in office, they contributed \$52 million; in the last year of the McGuinty government, we have provided over \$150 million to provide for more affordable housing. I want to thank the Minister of Finance and the housing providers for ensuring that this \$100 million will be out the door to municipalities and housing providers by March 31.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would ask the members to welcome former member Mr. Bill Wrye from the riding of Windsor-Sandwich, 32nd, 33rd and 34th Parliaments. Welcome, Bill.

VISITORS

Mr. Frank Klees: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would like to welcome to the Legislature Mr. Shadah Khokhar and members of the Pakistani-Canadian community who are in the House with us today in the east public gallery. They are here having presented to me some 2,000 signatures on a petition which I will table with you, should you give me allowance.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Welcome to Queen's Park today.

PETITIONS

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Frank Klees: It gives me great pleasure to in fact table with the House a petition that has been delivered to me, as I said, by Mr. Shadah Khokhar and members of the Canadian-Pakistani community. I read the petition:

"Petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty has called on the Ontario Legislature to consider removing the Lord's Prayer from its daily proceedings;

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer has been an integral part of our parliamentary heritage that was first established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe;

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer is today a significant part of the religious heritage of millions of Ontarians of culturally diverse backgrounds;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice of using the Lord's Prayer as part of its daily proceedings."

I am pleased to affix my signature in support of this petition.

1500

HOME CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to present a petition that says:

"Whereas the competitive bidding process has increased the privatization of Ontario's health care delivery, in direct violation of the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, 2004; and

"Whereas competitive bidding for home care services has decreased both the continuity and quality of care available to home care clients; and

"Whereas home care workers do not enjoy the same employment rights, such as successor rights, as all other Ontario workers have, which deprives them of termination rights, seniority rights and the right to move with their work when their employer agency loses a contract;

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

"We call on the government of Ontario:

"(1) to immediately stop the competitive bidding for home care services so home care clients can receive the continuity and quality of care they deserve; and

"(2) to extend successor rights under the Labour Relations Act to home care workers to ensure the home care sector is able to retain a workforce that is responsive to clients' needs."

This has been signed by people from Thessalon and Sault Ste. Marie. I agree with the petition and have affixed my name to it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario regarding the western Mississauga ambulatory surgery centre:

"Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

"Whereas 'day surgery' procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

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

"That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the Mississauga-Halton area and enable greater access to 'day surgery' procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed."

I send this to you by way of page Alex.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition that was sent to me by residents of Meaford and Dan and Cathy Mihalic.

"Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord's Prayer from daily proceedings in the Ontario Legislature; and

"Whereas the recitation of the Lord's Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer's message of forgiveness and the avoidance of evil is universal to the human condition: It is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena of conflict; and

"Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord's Prayer;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature."

I have signed this.

ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

Mr. Jeff Leal: I have a petition today regarding children in smoke-free cars, in support of Bill 11:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas children exposed to second-hand smoke are at a higher risk for respiratory illnesses including asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia, as well as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and increased incidences of cancer and heart disease in adulthood; and

"Whereas the Ontario Medical Association supports a ban on smoking in vehicles when children are present, as they have concluded that levels of second-hand smoke can be 23 times more concentrated in a vehicle than in a house because circulation is restricted within a small space; and

"Whereas the Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Ontario Tobacco-Free Network indicates that eight in 10 (80%) of Ontarians support 'legislation that would ban smoking in cars and other private vehicles where a child or adolescent under 16 years of age is present'; and

"Whereas Nova Scotia, California, Puerto Rico, and South Australia recently joined several jurisdictions of the United States of America in banning smoking in vehicles carrying children;

"We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to approve Bill 11 and amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to ban smoking in vehicles carrying children 16 years of age and under."

Since I agree with this petition, I will affix my signature to it and hand it to Daniel here.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Mr. John Yakabuski: Petition to the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the legacy of Pope John Paul II reflects his lifelong commitment to international understanding, peace and the defence of equality and human rights; and

"Whereas his legacy has an all-embracing meaning that is particularly relevant to Canada's multi-faith and multicultural traditions; and

"Whereas, as one of the great spiritual leaders of contemporary times, Pope John Paul II visited Ontario during his pontificate of more than 25 years and, on his visits, was enthusiastically greeted by Ontario's diverse religious and cultural communities;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to grant speedy passage into law of the private member's bill by MPP Frank Klees entitled An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day."

I support this petition and send it to the table with Jacqui.

HOME CARE

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): The member for Timmins-James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am so honoured to be recognized to introduce this petition—just joking.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government has continued the practice of competitive bidding for home care services; and

"Whereas the competitive bidding process has increased the privatization of Ontario's health care delivery, in direct violation of the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, 2004; and

"Whereas competitive bidding for home care services has decreased both the continuity and quality of care available to home care clients; and

"Whereas home care workers do not enjoy the same employment rights, such as successor rights, as all other Ontario workers have, which deprives them of termination rights, seniority rights and the right to move with their work when their employer agency loses a contract;

"We, the undersigned, petition the following:

"(1) to immediately stop the competitive bidding process for home care services so home care clients can receive the continuity and quality of care they deserve; and

"(2) to extend successor rights under the Labour Relations Act to home care workers to ensure the home care sector is able to retain a workforce that is responsive to clients' needs."

I affix my signature.

ANTI-SMOKING LEGISLATION

Mr. Kuldip Kular: This petition is for children and smoke-free cars, in support of Bill 11.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas children exposed to second-hand smoke are at a higher risk for respiratory illnesses including asthma,

bronchitis and pneumonia, as well as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and increased incidences of cancer and heart disease in adulthood; and

“Whereas the Ontario Medical Association supports a ban on smoking in vehicles when children are present, as they have concluded that levels of second-hand smoke can be 23 times more concentrated in a vehicle than in a house because circulation is restricted within a small space; and

“Whereas the Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of the Ontario Tobacco-Free Network indicates that eight in 10 (80%) of Ontarians support ‘legislation that would ban smoking in cars and other private vehicles where a child or adolescent under 16 years of age is present’; and

“Whereas Nova Scotia, California, Puerto Rico, and South Australia recently joined several jurisdictions of the United States of America in banning smoking in vehicles carrying children;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to approve Bill 11 and amend the Smoke-Free Ontario Act to ban smoking in vehicles carrying children 16 years of age and under.”

I agree with the petition so I affix my signature on it as well.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mrs. Julia Munro: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord’s Prayer from its place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

“Whereas the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer’s message is one of forgiveness, of providing for those in need of their ‘daily bread’ and of preserving us from the evils that we may fall into; it is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena for conflict; and

“Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord’s Prayer;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord’s Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature.”

I have affixed my signature to this and given it to Magali.

1510

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Kim Craiton: This petition has been submitted to me by a number of long-term-care facilities in my riding—Meadows of Dorchester and Upper Canada Lodge—and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the people of Ontario, wish to thank the government of Ontario for listening and acting on

concerns brought to your attention regarding the care of our most precious and most vulnerable citizens, our seniors. These are the people that through hard work, dedication and love created the great province of Ontario.

“We thank the government of Ontario for:

“Increasing funding for long-term care by almost \$800 million, a 38% increase;

“Funding almost 6,100 new full-time staff in long-term-care homes, including 2,300 nurses;

“Creating 1,200 RPN positions in our long-term-care homes, ensuring at least one new registered practical nurse in every one of our 628 homes;

“Opening 7,712 new long-term-care beds;

“Launching a program to redevelop 35,000 older long-term-care beds over the next 10 years, beginning in 2008;

“Introducing new legislation to improve care in long-term-care homes;

“Introducing new regulations requiring 24/7 coverage by a registered nurse and at least two baths per week;

“Increasing the food allowance per resident effective September 1, to ensure that residents are provided with an improved range of nutritional menu options and having all meal plans reviewed and approved by a dietician;

“Introducing a new requirement that, as of December 2005, all long-term-care homes arrange for physiotherapy services for their residents;

“Introducing legislation requiring tougher inspections and more accountability, and providing an action line, a province-wide toll-free information and complaint line, for long-term-care residents and their families;

“Introducing better training for staff, including best-practices guidelines for nurses in LTC homes, such as treating diabetes and preventing falls, and investing \$2.4 million to train front-line staff in how to better care for dementia and related conditions.

“While all of the above have made wonderful improvements to the care of our elderly, there is still much more to be done that could improve the quality of life and preserve the dignity of our parents, grandparents, neighbours and friends.

“LTC homes are admitting people with a greater variety of care needs, including younger care residents with acquired brain injury, multiple sclerosis, Huntington’s disease etc.,” and other related illnesses, “and our elderly becoming more frail. The level of care has increased so much that it is not possible to provide the level of care identified in Bill 140 with the current staffing funding formula ...

“Therefore we, the undersigned, hereby petition the government of Ontario to provide funding specifically to be used for the employment of personal support workers. These workers provide much of the daily care to the residents by assisting with personal care, transfers, toileting, bathing and much-needed emotional support. By dedicating funding for the sole employment of personal support workers and by mandating a staff-to-resident ratio accordingly, we would ensure our seniors are receiving proper care.”

I’m pleased to sign this petition in support of it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2008 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 25, 2008, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): The Chair recognizes the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I haven't had the opportunity to congratulate you on your elevation to the chair. Congratulations. I'm sure you'll do an outstanding job.

I want to say that I appreciate very much the opportunity to respond to the budget on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus. At the outset, I want to indicate that I will be sharing my time, sharing the honour, with my colleague the member for Erie—Lincoln—our party's finance critic, the man always working for you—Tim Hudak.

For several weeks now, the Progressive Conservative caucus has been working with the finance committee of this House, travelling across the province, listening to Ontario's small businesses, families and individuals, and we're hearing the same message from one end of the province to the other: Something is wrong with Ontario, and people are worried. They see jobs disappearing, many of them moving to other provinces. They see businesses shutting their operations, some of them moving away, some of them closing down completely. They see their children and grandchildren moving away to find work in other provinces.

Despite Premier McGuinty's protestations and excuses, this is not a national trend or merely an echo of something going on in the United States. No, unfortunately, the McGuinty government has achieved the unthinkable:

Canada is in its second-longest period of economic expansion in history, yet Ontario's share of national nominal GDP—gross domestic product—has gone down, from 41.3% in 2002 to 38.6% in 2006.

Business investment in Canada—I want to stress that, in Canada—has expanded for the 12th consecutive year in a row, but Ontario's economic growth has been below the national average.

The Canadian unemployment rate is the lowest in 33 years, yet Ontario's unemployment rate was above the national average for the first time in its history in 2007.

Ontario had the second-lowest growth in the country in 2007.

Since 2003, Ontario has lost 71,804 people to other provinces.

Ontario has lost 194,000 manufacturing jobs since July 2004 and counting, regrettably.

When Mr. McGuinty became Premier, Ontario's per capita fiscal capacity was \$400 above the federal equalization standard; it's now only \$84 above that standard. We've gone from \$400 down to \$84 in four years. At this

rate, we will reach have-not status before the end of this government's mandate—a have-not province, Ontario. This has never happened before. That's quite an achievement by the McGuinty government.

When people warn the Premier about have-not status for Ontario, this is what they mean. We are spiralling out of control while this Premier spends more and taxes more, while jobs and business leave the province, and families ask how this has been permitted to happen. This is not a North America problem, this is not a Canada problem, this is an Ontario problem. This is a McGuinty government problem.

This is the sort of problem that could only happen when you apply the tax-and-spend approach to the province's finances, which we haven't seen since the mid-1980s when David Peterson and Bob Rae fired off the one-two punch that knocked Ontario into one of the most disastrous recessionary periods in our history. And with this budget, Dalton McGuinty is rolling out the red carpet for an economic slowdown. It's like he's given up, like he believes a slowdown or, even worse, a recession is inevitable.

If you just look at the budget, the marquee items are designed not to stave off a slowdown, not to turn around a recession, but to give up, hunker down and accept what the Premier apparently believes is inevitable, something he can't fix.

Just look at what the budget offered; it offered clues to what the Premier believes. If he believes more Ontarians are going to need social assistance under his watch, he might spend more on social assistance. That's just what he did. If he believes more Ontarians are going to lose their jobs under his watch, he might throw money at re-training them. That's just what he did. And if he believes more Ontarians are going to trade in their high-paying manufacturing jobs for minimum wage jobs, he might increase the minimum wage by 75 cents, in the hopes they won't be too angry at him. And that's just what he did. He's not just hunkering down, not just giving up, but rolling out the red carpet for an economic slowdown. Everyone can see it.

1520

On the front page of today's *Globe and Mail*, the lead paragraph says, and I'm quoting: "Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty's government is ... battening down the hatches for an economic slowdown."

The *Sun* media, again quoting: "A nervous Ontario is preparing to batten down the hatches"—that phrase again—"as all indicators point to an economic slowdown."

That's the response of this government to challenging times: to batten down the hatches, give up and roll out the red carpet for a slowdown.

The Progressive Conservative Party would suggest that there's another way to deal with challenging times, and that is to face them head-on, to do the thing that always turns economies around, and to never, ever give up on Ontario.

There's a better way, one that doesn't give up on Ontario, and we'll get to that better way in just a moment. At this moment, Ontario is becoming a have-not province. Why? Because Dalton McGuinty is a "cannot" Premier. He cannot lead this province, because he's a bad manager. He's not trustworthy and he seemingly doesn't care.

I'm going to take some time to go through these one by one. It may change your minds.

I'll take "bad manager" first. This is not an opinion; it's math. I'll quickly go over some of those numbers and facts again. They're so serious that they bear repeating.

Under the Premier's bad management, 71,804 people have left Ontario. Over 194,000 manufacturing jobs have vanished since July 2004. Business investment in Ontario is now lower than the national average. Our share of national nominal GDP: down. Our economic growth is below the national average.

To be fair, the Premier has exceeded in one area in particular. Under the Premier's careful management, Ontario is now above the national average in—wait for it—unemployment. Give credit where credit is due.

Not since fellow Liberal Bob Rae sat in the Premier's chair has Ontario seen jobs and citizens fleeing Ontario, recession clouds looming, and a Premier focused on feeding that recession rather than cultivating growth.

So how does one cultivate growth? What one doesn't do is what the Premier has done, and that is tax, spend, and punish job creation, which led to Ontario having the second-lowest growth in the country last year. All five chartered banks ranked Ontario ninth of 10 provinces in economic growth. There's only one rung left on the bottom of the ladder, and the Premier has his eye on it with this budget.

Again, it's not just the Progressive Conservative caucus saying this. I'll quote from today's National Post: "You've got to hand it to Mr. McGuinty and his finance minister, Dwight Duncan. Their fiscal strategy is consistent. When the economy is doing well, keep taxes high and spend big. When the economy is heading into the dumper, keep taxes high and spend big."

It's just like the last Liberal Ontario Premier, Bob Rae. You can't tax your way out of a recession. You can't spend your way out of a recession. You can't throw up your hands, batten down the hatches and give up, like the Premier and the finance minister have done with this budget. No. If you want to beat a recession, if you want to turn things around, if you want to make Ontario a better place, you must cultivate, you must encourage, growth.

So how do you cultivate and encourage growth? I'm glad you asked, Speaker. The Progressive Conservative Party has lots of experience in cleaning up messes left behind by tax-and-spend Liberal Premiers.

The way to cultivate and encourage growth—and I hope you're listening—is to reward growth, not punish it. One way that works every time it's tried is tax cuts. By the way, every time Liberal Premiers like Bob Rae and Mr. McGuinty do the opposite and raise taxes, growth,

jobs and prosperity flee this province. That works every time it's tried, too. Progressive Conservatives would cultivate and encourage growth by lowering the tax burden on those who create growth. Tax cuts create jobs. It works every time it's tried.

The Progressive Conservative Party, if in government, would listen to, as well, despite the rhetoric of the finance minister today to the contrary—we know what he's actually doing—and work with, not whine about, the federal finance minister and cut punishing taxes on job creators.

Interruption.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Did we catch whoever that was? Obviously, it was a Liberal.

As everyone knows, including the Premier, if you want less of something, you tax it more; if you want more of something, you tax it less.

Interjections.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Try paying attention for a change over there; you might learn something.

I say the Premier knows this because he's said it himself and he's done it himself. He says he's on a mission to reduce smoking, so he increased taxes on smoking several times. He wanted less of it, so he taxed it more. So apparently he gets it. The question is, why is the Premier doing to jobs what he did to cigarettes, taxing them out of Ontario?

When Progressive Conservatives were in charge, we cut taxes and jobs went up significantly; over one million new jobs were created in the province of Ontario. It works every time it's tried.

At the federal level, Conservatives are cutting taxes and jobs are up to the highest employment rate Canada has enjoyed in 33 years. It works every time it's tried.

In Ontario, one lonely holdout: a Premier who understands that if you want more of something, like jobs, you tax it less, yet even though he knows it to be true, he can't manage to do it. That's because he's a bad manager.

He's also not trustworthy. He just can't keep his word. The name McGuinty has become synonymous with broken promises. As each of us knows in our personal lives and in our working lives, you cannot trust a promise-breaker because you never know what they're going to do. It makes it hard for investors to set up businesses in Ontario when they can't trust the guy in charge.

Am I being too harsh here? I just want to give you a few examples.

I'm sure you remember when this Liberal government, this McGuinty government, blindsided that famous diamond company De Beers by tripling taxation rates on their new diamond mine. A company executive afterwards said it was like something you'd expect from a banana republic. That's one example.

Another one: How about their promise not to increase taxes? Everyone knows about their 2003 election promise and then bringing in the largest tax increase in the province's history.

One final one: their promise to close coal plants in the province by 2007.

But there's no shortage of material here. We could devote a full speech to promises made and broken.

As I mentioned at the outset, the Premier is a bad manager, not trustworthy; and the third point I made, he seemingly doesn't care.

So how do we know? How do we know he doesn't care? We judge that by his actions. Does he care about the law-abiding citizens of Caledonia, who have had to put up with their situation for two years?

Mr. John Yakabuski: No.

1530

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Does he care about the 194,000-plus Ontarians who've lost their manufacturing jobs under his watch? No.

Does he care about 71,804 of our sons, daughters, husbands and grandchildren who've thrown in the towel, forced to leave our once-flourishing province to find work in other provinces? No.

Does he care that, under his watch, under Dalton McGuinty's watch, Ontario's unemployment rate is above the national average? No.

Does he care that Ontario, once the economic engine of Canada, is on the verge of becoming a have-not province under his watch? No.

If he did care, if he genuinely cared, he would do something to make Ontario a better place. He wouldn't batten down the hatches. He wouldn't give up. He would stop taxing and spending—taxing and spending which never, ever works. And he would start doing what always works: cultivating, encouraging and rewarding growth.

A Progressive Conservative budget would have taken steps to restore Ontario's position as Canada's economic leader. We would have done that by reducing the tax burden on business and new business investment. We would have fully eliminated capital taxes in Ontario now. We would have reduced taxes on small business. We would have addressed the very real concerns about future energy supply and pricing. And we would have provided a plan to once and for all eliminate our ballooning infrastructure deficit and set real targets to reduce the regulatory burden on our businesses.

In conclusion, just a few more words: Unlike the Premier, we in the Progressive Conservative Party will never give up on Ontario. We will never punish growth and job creators. We will never sit by while jobs, investment, people and confidence leave this great province. We will never batten down the hatches and wait for an economic slowdown to arrive.

What will we do? We in the Progressive Conservative Party will always work hard for Ontario. We will always reward growth and those who create growth. We will always give investors and job creators a welcome home in Ontario. We will always give workers and their families a welcome home in Ontario, which will give the government more money to spend on those who need it. And we will always, always, do our best to make Ontario

the best place in the world to live, work and raise a family.

I now pass it to the member from Niagara West—Glanbrook.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I thank my colleague the leader of the official opposition, the member for Leeds—Grenville, for the opportunity to speak to the budget motion. I also commend him for his outstanding remarks that rightly capture the difference between the old-fashioned tax-and-spend approach of the Dalton McGuinty government with the Progressive Conservative approach of opening up Ontario for business investment and creating well-paying jobs once more in what should be Canada's lead province.

What I want to point out too, in support of my colleague's comments, is the extraordinary increase in government spending that has taken place under the Dalton McGuinty government. In fact, they had some additional \$5 billion in revenue that was not anticipated when they tabled their budget last spring. You'd think that some of that \$5 billion would be used to give welcomed and well-deserved tax relief to seniors and working families across the province of Ontario; some tax relief to businesses that are hard-pressed to hire more folks—in fact, we're seeing jobs leave the province, as my colleague outlined; or, as my colleague for Carleton—Mississippi Mills brought up today, maybe some better down payments on the debt instead of the increasing debt, as he mentioned in his question. Instead, almost every penny of that additional \$5-billion windfall was rushed out the door in spending sprees for the economic statement, or over \$2 billion in last-minute spending sprees in the last two weeks of March.

Let's put this into perspective: It took from Confederation, John Sandfield Macdonald, Ontario's first Premier, to Ernie Eves to get government spending up to \$68 billion. In his five years in office, Dalton McGuinty will have brought government spending to some \$96 billion. In terms of how much is spent on government programs, that is up \$28.2 billion since 2003, an absolutely extraordinary 48% increase in government spending.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What are we getting for it?

Mr. Tim Hudak: My colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke asks, "What are we getting for it?" Certainly, if you're a senior in Glanbrook looking for a long-term-care bed for your spouse, you saw nothing in today's budget. If you're a young person from Pembroke looking for a well-paying job to raise a family and buy a home in Ontario, you saw nothing in this budget. If you're a young mother in downtown Hamilton trying to get your kid to emergency in a short waiting time, you saw nothing in yesterday's budget. My colleague says, "What do you get for the 48% increase in spending?" Certainly not much to brag about if I were a member of the Liberal caucus.

To put that further into perspective, the 48% increase in government program spending: We often talk about Bob Rae. I guess he was, after all, a Liberal Premier with an orange puff in his jacket pocket. Bob Rae increased

program spending by—Dalton McGuinty was 48%. What do you think Bob Rae did over his five years?

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: About 47.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Bob Rae had a 15% program spending increase. We talk about Bob Rae being the king of runaway spending; Dalton McGuinty has almost tripled it.

Interjection.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Do you know what? The gold medal winner previously in Ontario's history for program spending increases was the David Peterson government. In his five years in office, David Peterson increased program spending by 46%. So Dalton McGuinty has actually left David Peterson and Bob Rae's big-spending, big-government approaches in the dust with his 48% increase in his five years in office.

The other challenge is the fact that while revenues are up \$5 billion in the past fiscal year, they've spent all of that money. If the economy continues to decline, as my colleague outlined some major concerns already where Ontario stands last or second-to-last in Confederation—I think TD recently said that 0.5% is the expected growth rate ahead—Dalton McGuinty has given himself very little, if any, wiggle room because he has spent all of that additional money that has come into the provincial coffers.

You would think that some form of economic stimulus like we have called for—lower taxes for businesses, working families and seniors—would help to get our economy back on track. Dalton McGuinty, by spending all of that money, has taken away all of his room to manoeuvre if the economy continues to go downhill.

Where does that money all come from, the increase in expenditures by some 48%? Mostly it comes from the wallets of hard-pressed families and seniors in Ontario and from businesses struggling to make ends meet in the face of international competition. Similarly, there have been substantial increases from the federal government into Ontario coffers. My colleague for Nepean—Carleton caught the Minister of Finance's hand in the cookie jar today, trying to take credit for what was actually a transfer from the federal government. He talks about wanting a partnership; I don't know if I would enter into much of a partnership with the finance minister if he tries to take credit for somebody else's good work.

In those two areas, revenues have increased, but they have spent it all. What has been the impact? As my colleague indicated, almost 200,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs have fled the province of Ontario. Some 70,000 talented individuals have left Ontario and now call Saskatchewan, BC, Manitoba or Alberta their home.

Shockingly, welfare recipients are actually up 11% under the Dalton McGuinty government. That was actually after the previous PC government had reduced the welfare rolls by over half a million people, getting them back into the workforce, productive lives in society, and Dalton McGuinty now has reversed that trend and increased the welfare rolls by some 11%.

1540

The only thing that wasn't leaked in yesterday's budget was the funding for job training. The question that people are asking, from Stoney Creek to Ottawa to Kenora, is, job training for what? What jobs exactly are they being trained for? When you see 200,000 well-paying jobs leave to other areas, you wonder where folks are going to find work. And it's 20,000 positions, mind you—the 200,000 jobs already lost and banks projecting potentially 200,000 more.

We saw one solution in the finance minister's backyard: Air Duncan. We'll call it Air Duncan, which proposes to fly unemployed workers from Windsor to Saskatoon and other cities to find work and fly them home on weekends to stay with their families. Certainly we don't expect it, but it may be a reasonable conclusion that we'll actually be training workers for other provinces, because these guys have failed to create any jobs in the province of Ontario. Instead, they should have prioritized job creation, making sure there are well-paying jobs out there before the retraining initiatives, or at least done it at the same time.

The other result of this overspending, high taxation and higher energy price policy is that Ontario is now heading potentially for have-not status. It's not just Bob Runciman saying that and it's not just me saying that. Don Drummond, the chief economist for TD, said that it's not so far from being an equalization province, referring to the province of Ontario. Douglas Porter, the deputy chief economist of the Bank of Montreal, said, "While the arcane equalization calculations may still peg Ontario officially as a 'have' province, the reality is far less friendly for the provincial economy—Ontario is becoming relatively poorer each year."

It's hard to contemplate that an Ontario we've always known as the engine of Canada, a place where people from St. John's, Newfoundland or Victoria, BC, would come to, to raise a family, to get a good job, to own a home, could possibly become a have-not province because of their outdated tax-and-spend policies. Imagine that: The lasting legacy of a Dalton McGuinty government could very well be taking Ontario from a leader in Canada to a have-not province.

The other impact is on job creation. Let me give you a couple of statistics here, and I want to thank my colleagues Ted Arnott, Toby Barrett and others who joined the finance committee in helping prepare our dissenting report. What we point out is that while the McGuinty members try to brag about the number of jobs created—it's 400,000 or so, which is actually a dismal record compared to the rest of the provinces—

Mr. John Yakabuski: One million.

Mr. Tim Hudak: As my colleague from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke points out, the previous PC government, with a forward-looking economic policy, created a business environment that saw some one million net new jobs created in Ontario during its mandate.

We point out that over half of the new jobs that Dalton McGuinty and his crew brag about have been in the

public sector. Of that 400,000, some 225,000, to be precise, are public sector jobs. Government jobs themselves don't create wealth; they are simply a transfer from the private sector. The real test of an economy's performance is private sector job creation, which is considerably lacking in Ontario. Consider this: From 2004 until the end of 2007, Ontario added an average of 51,000 public sector jobs per year; the total number of private sector jobs, 11,425. That is about a 5% increase in government jobs and less than a 1% annual increase in private sector jobs. That is simply not sustainable. Again, the total number of private sector jobs over their mandate: about 112,000. Across the eight years of PC government, from 1996 to 2003, private sector jobs expanded by an average of 109,000 jobs per year.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: Ten times as much.

Mr. Tim Hudak: My colleague says, "Ten times as much." So per year is greater, or about the same, as the total jobs the Liberals have created over the four years.

So what do you do about it? Well, we had hoped that yesterday, and maybe still, Dalton McGuinty would reject the old-fashioned approach of tax-and-spend government—ballooning the size of government, runaway spending, raising taxes on the backs of seniors, families and businesses—that has chased jobs out of our province. You'd think he would have learned from previous Premiers Bob Rae and David Peterson who catapulted Ontario into its deepest recession since the Second World War.

Sadly, in yesterday's budget, an extraordinary opportunity to reverse that trend, Dalton McGuinty made no attempt to stimulate the economy or create well-paying jobs in the province of Ontario.

So what have the Progressive Conservatives called for in that budget, in that report? As my colleague from Leeds–Grenville, the Leader of the Opposition, had indicated, we have called for lower taxes to our business sector—now the highest in all of North America, thanks to Dalton McGuinty—to help stimulate job creation and investment in our province, lowering the tax burden on both small and large businesses; as both my colleague Mr. Runciman and John Tory have said, "lowering the red tape burden," because the amount of red tape and regulation that comes out of this government is abso-

lutely incredible. It's throttling entrepreneurship and innovation in Ontario.

We've called for Ontario families and seniors, the hard-working families who have seen higher taxes, higher user fees, higher hydro rates and higher utilities, to finally get a break from this government.

We've also called for an address of the looming energy crisis with a responsible plan to increase our energy supply to make sure we can remain competitive. It used to be a strength of the province of Ontario. Now we have the second-highest energy costs in competitive states and provinces.

I would encourage members, if they haven't had a chance, to look at the dissenting report, listen to what John Tory has said and listen to what Bob Runciman said a bit earlier on. That is a recipe to turn our economy around, to start creating jobs again in Ontario, to bring economic opportunities to young people or to people who will lose their jobs in the manufacturing sector to find well-paying jobs to help provide for their families. I fear, if Dalton McGuinty continues down the old-fashioned tax-and-spend approach, that his legacy will be to take Ontario from a leader in Confederation to a have-not province, from the economic engine to the caboose.

I do hope that, in the debate coming up, the members opposite will listen to the solid advice from this province, and also that it has been successful—Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia and Quebec are attracting jobs out of Ontario—to turn things around and again bring hope and opportunity to working families and taxpayers in our province.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Kormos: I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? All those in favour? The motion carries.

Debate adjourned.

Hon. Jim Watson: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Andrea Horwath): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? All those in favour? Any opposed? It carries.

The House adjourned at 1547.

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