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des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 16 December 2003

Mardi 16 décembre 2003

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 16 December 2003

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 16 décembre 2003

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Is there a quorum in the House?

The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott): Is there a quorum in the House?

Deputy Clerk (Ms Deborah Deller): Quorum is present.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you very much.

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 15, 2003 on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Mr Robert W. Runciman (Leeds-Grenville): I suspected there was a quorum, but with this government and their experience yesterday with the finance and economic affairs committee, you can't take anything for granted. The chief whip is obviously upset, and I can understand him being upset, given what happened. I don't consider it a low blow at all, when you look at the number of witnesses who took time off from their busy schedules to appear before that committee, hoping they would have a real opportunity for input into the auto insurance legislation, and were left effectively cooling their heels, discussing it with the members of the committee.

The brand new government, a significant majority government, failed to have their members present, meet the test of a quorum and give these good citizens of Ontario an opportunity to have input into this important piece of legislation that the government has lauded and indicated how much it's going to save consumers. Yet they couldn't find enough members in a majority to ensure they had a quorum. It's very difficult to understand.

I said earlier that if this was a minority government situation, we could recognize and appreciate there are some real challenges. I was a whip myself in opposition and I know that it can be a difficult job at times. But certainly with 72 members in the House, failing to meet quorum is inexcusable—I think that's a fair word to use.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate. I want to talk about a number of things in the 20 minutes allotted to me. I had been able to cover some ground earlier with respect to the current government, but I think it's fair to revisit some of the comments I made earlier today with respect to this government.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): Don't repeat yourself.

Mr Runciman: Mr Patten, the member for Ottawa Centre, is here. It's good to see him. He's been a long-time contributing member to the assembly. I hope any of his interjections are very positive and helpful, as I'm sure they will be.

Mr Patten: Absolutely. I want to hear new material.

Mr Runciman: I assure him that before the conclusion of my remarks, there will be some new material.

I think it is important to continue to remind my friends across the aisle that they should sit back. They have a number of people who went through the 1985-90 experience. They should make sure that they're talking to these people. They should have an opportunity for input in terms of what went wrong: "Why did we fail so badly after five years in government, between 1985 and 1990? Why did the people of Ontario reject us so soundly and, beyond belief, elect an NDP government?"

1850

There are a lot of reasons for that, and I think those of us who went through that period have some appreciation for it, because obviously we were serving in this place and we saw the actions of the Liberal government of the day and we also heard from the people as we campaigned on the hustings in 1990. Certainly arrogance was at the top of the list, and "arrogance" was in capital letters as well.

Interjection.

Mr Runciman: Well, I can suggest to you that we saw arrogance in the House on a daily basis. We saw it in Mr Peterson's actions with respect to conceding Senate seats in the Meech Lake discussion. We saw Mr Peterson's arrogance in calling an early election, only three-plus years into a mandate. In retrospect, of course, we know why he did that. Some of his cabinet colleagues did not know why he did that, but the reality was they had tabled a balanced budget with a modest surplus earlier that year, knew by May or June that they were in a very serious financial situation, that in fact they were going to be facing a serious deficit situation, that they'd have to make some very difficult decisions to meet that deficit challenge head-on and didn't want to tell the public about it. That's the reality: They didn't want to tell the public

about it. If they'd taken the mandate out until the normal term of four years, it would have been apparent to everyone in the province that they had led the people of Ontario down the path with respect to a balanced budget. That's why Mr Peterson, in close co-operation with Robert Nixon, the former Treasurer of the province—between the two of them and their political backroom cronies—decided, "Let's get this thing out of the way before the people really know what's happening, before the people really know that we've been attempting to pull the wool over their eyes with respect to our financial management of this province." That's the reality. That's what happened. That's just one part of the arrogance of the former Liberal government.

The reality is that we're seeing that here after only, what is it, seven weeks and change with this new government?

Ms Monique Smith (Nipissing): Eight weeks.

Mr Runciman: Is it eight weeks? We're seeing it already with this new government. I have friends across the way—

Mr Ernie Parsons (Prince Edward-Hastings): I don't know about that.

Mr Runciman: Well, on some days I have friends; other days, not so much friends. But once we walk away from this place, hopefully we can put a lot of the political baggage aside.

When I say this, you can look at it as being helpful or simply as being critical or political, but I think we all have to learn from past history. You have some people here who went through those years, and hopefully they're not only reflecting upon it but making a contribution around the cabinet table and the caucus rooms about, "Let's not make the same mistakes we made between 1985 and 1990."

Some of their colleagues are already making those mistakes, in terms of their reaction when we raise issues, by yelling across the floor, "That's the reality of October 2. You lost the election. You got kicked in the pants. You're paying the price. We are now on this side of the aisle, and we have every right to do what we're doing." To some degree that's very accurate. They did win the election: there was a call for change in the province, and they were the beneficiaries of that call.

In terms of their campaign promises, I believe they have a right, and in some respects a duty, to implement the promises they made. Another aspect of arrogance in terms of promises is the fact that they're very quickly walking away or running away or hiding from many of the 231 promises they made in the election program.

Mr Patten: Give us a list of them.

Mr Runciman: I can give you a list of failures, and I will, before my time is up, if the member from Ottawa Centre really wants to hear this.

Certainly one of the things they did not talk about during the election campaign was retroactivity with respect to the education equity act. My colleague from Nepean has talked about this at significant extent and how unfortunate this part of the initiative is and the fact

that people have planned, made decisions. Many of these people are not high-end, high-income families in the province, but people who send their kids to a Muslim school, or a Christian school. I certainly have small Christian schools in my riding. These people are not wealthy, well-to-do families. These are hard-working families, both parents working hard to meet ends and trying to provide their children with a Christian education. As a result of this retroactive provision in the tax bill, they are going to be penalized even further for their views and their wishes in terms of the education of their own children. That's truly unfortunate, but again, the fact is that the current government, the Minister of Finance, the Premier and the committee, which has a majority of Liberal members, are unwilling to even address that very valid concern which was not part of their election platform.

Coming into this without a lot of prepared comments, my theme is in terms of arrogance. I think a lot of the initiatives and undertakings of the current Liberal government can fall under that broad theme of arrogance. One of the things that I have watched, being a member for almost 23 years, is the deterioration in this House. I think some of it has to be attributed to—I'm not blaming anyone; this is a reality—the Liberal government in 1985 starting to televise the proceedings. It was an initiative that I supported, but I think that has in some way contributed to the way this House and members of this House have performed since the introduction of television.

There's a whole range of reasons why it has happened, but certainly I believe, and I think sincerely the government House leader believes, that we should be doing things, undertaking initiatives that can improve the performance of this place and improve the impression that the public have of this place and the meaningful contribution that this place and individual members can make to the well-being of the province of Ontario. One of the reasons that I supported a pilot programming motion was improvement in terms of co-operation. I'd like to see that continue, but I think there have been a number of things that have occurred since we agreed to this new initiative that are a cause for concern.

Certainly the finance committee's failure to meet quorum, and the government's subsequent refusal to provide additional committee time to ensure that the witnesses who appeared have a full and on-the-record hearing before the committee, is unfortunate, to say the least. It also sends a message to those of us who want to see this place operate in a more co-operative and better fashion. It sends a wrong message to all of us.

Earlier on, the government's insistence on having government members perform the duties of chair and vice-chair of the government agencies committee again raised very serious questions about the government's commitment to democratic reform. It is unheard of in parliamentary democracies that allow the review of government appointments, where a government member will chair a committee reviewing government appointments. It casts a cloud over the process; there's no

question about it. The public and those who care about these kinds of issues have to question the credibility of the process—there's no question about that—and the sincerity of the government with respect to wanting to not only engage its own members in a meaningful dialogue but engage members of the opposition in making a real and meaningful contribution to the deliberations of this Assembly. I would encourage the government—we still have two days—to provide that additional sitting time for the finance committee, to provide a night sitting. It is not unheard of, Speaker—you and I have been around this place for some time—to have a night sitting of a committee so that we can afford those witnesses a return opportunity to provide input into the deliberations before we bring the bill back to this place for third reading.

1900

I referenced this earlier today, again under the broad theme of arrogance. The member of the third party raised an issue that I know is dear to the hearts of many members of the NDP, and this is the provision of services for parents with autistic children. Again, a very valid point was raised, and what was the response that we got from the minister responsible for children? She said, “Blame it on the former government. Blame it on the former government that we're not keeping our promise.” Once again: “We are not keeping our promise. Blame it on the former government.”

Let's look at the history of this promise. I think what the member for Sudbury was referencing was a letter written by the now-Premier as Leader of the opposition, 10 calendar days before the election, promising to extend benefits to autistic children—10 days before the election. Now put this in context with respect to the claims they are making about this bogus \$5.6-billion deficit. We had finance committee hearings in April or May, where the now-Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet suggested that the deficit could be as high \$5 billion.

Hon Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): I never said that.

Mr Runciman: Well, you suggested that. That number was referenced. I haven't seen the minutes.

Hon Mr Phillips: Don't quote me, then.

Mr Runciman: I didn't quote you directly. My understanding, and what I read in the print media, is that you referenced a \$5-billion figure.

Hon Mr Phillips: Well, you're wrong.

Mr Runciman: If that's wrong, I do withdraw. Certainly there was a reference from the then-finance critic, Mr Phillips, that there was going to be significant financial pressure. What the number might be we'll leave to conjecture, but certainly during the election campaign we heard claims from the Liberal Party that the deficit was going to be significantly above \$2 billion. Mr McGuinty, the now-Premier, was saying from the outset, “We built this into our economic plan. We can deal with a \$2-billion shortfall and still meet all of our 231 campaign commitments.”

And then, during the course of the election, we had the Fraser Institute, I think, and Mark Mullins indicate that

the deficit was going to be closer to \$5 billion if the government didn't make some necessary changes to address it—a projected deficit in the neighbourhood of \$5 billion from the Fraser Institute. In that environment, Dalton McGuinty, leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, where they indicated publicly that they knew there was going to be a significant budgetary challenge, anywhere between \$2 billion and \$5 billion—this was public information—Dalton McGuinty said 10 days before the election, “I will meet this commitment. I make this solemn promise to you, the parents of autistic children.”

So what happens? Here we are now, seven weeks into this government, and we hear this tired refrain from the government benches, “Blame it on the former government. We can't keep our promise. We made the promise in the full knowledge of the challenges we were going to face, but we're not about to accept responsibility.” That falls under the heading of arrogance. There's no question about it.

I want to continue on this theme and talk about the report on racial profiling by the human rights commission last week, and the response of the government of the day by the Minister for Community Safety and Correctional Services and the Premier. It was a knee-jerk response. It was a response to special interests who have supported the Liberal Party for the past number of years, including the Toronto Star, very vigorously and actively, and unprofessionally in my view as a former newspaper reporter. The Star has always been a black mark on journalism, in my view. In any event—

Hon Sandra Pupatello (Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues): OK, Mr Alliance Leader.

Mr Runciman: Mr Speaker, we had trouble controlling her in opposition; can't you do something about her in government?

Interjections.

Mr Runciman: Who has the floor, Mr Speaker?

The Acting Speaker: I ask the Minister of Community and Social Services to refrain from interjections, please.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham): Go sign your Christmas cards.

Mr Runciman: Yes, do something productive.

Where was I? I think it's important, because I know this is a very sensitive issue. No one knows it better than I in terms of being in a justice portfolio for six of the last eight years, when you're walking on egg shells talking about this kind of issue. I think that's a message that was not delivered to the Premier and, as I'll call him, the Solicitor General before they went into a scrum. I think it was a knee-jerk reaction to vested interests and special interests who've supported the Liberal Party—

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. Your time has expired.

Questions and comments?

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): As always, it is a pleasure to listen to the member from Leeds-Grenville. I honestly must tell you that when he speaks I

often do not agree with him, but he speaks on such a broad range of topics that it's interesting. He went from retroactivity of the government's bill, to the finance committee and the lack of quorum, to autistic children, to the \$5.6-billion risk—I use those words advisedly to the minister—and then to racial profiling. He did all of that within about 10 minutes.

Just to deal with some of that, the retroactivity provisions of this government I find to be objectionable. I find them to be unparliamentary and I find them to be very bad law. In that regard, at least, I must stand here and say that I commend him for his statements, even though I believe with all of my heart and with all of my soul that the public education system is where we should be putting the money and that the public education system is crying out for that money.

No law in this country that has ever been retroactive has been a successful law. You cannot lead people to expect one thing and then suddenly make illegal or wrong what they have come to expect. If you are going to change the law, which I commend the government for changing, you must change it to make it current. When you make it current, people would then know what to expect. Being retroactive on this position is as wrong as retroactively changing the Criminal Code to make something illegal yesterday that wasn't, so that someone might find themselves in that kind of difficulty.

He also talked about the plight of autistic children. Today was a very telling day, when the government used its muscle, its legislative and legal muscle, to go down to the courts to fight those poor parents who are only trying to do the best for their children. I would ask this government to live up to what you stood for in the election and to fight for ordinary people and not what you've done in these last couple of days.

Hon Mr Phillips: I want to respond to the member for Leeds-Grenville. I see on a daily basis the mess we were left. I just say to the people of Ontario, recognize this: The hospitals in the province of Ontario spent \$800 million in operating costs and the province did not provide the funding for that. They have had to go out and borrow that money; that's \$800 million in debt to March 31, 2003. The government said to the hospitals, "You keep spending the money, you go borrow the money," so \$800 million of debt—operating cost and debt. Children's Aid Societies—\$25 million. The province reported enormously inflated profits from Ontario Power Generation last fiscal year. The budget was barely balanced last year. When you add in these costs, we were running a real deficit. What I now find, on a daily basis, are costs that the government never had in its budget—\$1 billion that the Provincial Auditor identified—\$400 million alone on hospital deficits this year; \$180 million in pay equity, not in the budget; children's aid societies \$60 million, not in the budget.

1910

What we found was a fiscal statement that bore no relationship to reality, and that's the kindest thing I can possibly say. So I want to assure the people of Ontario

we are rolling up our sleeves, we are putting in place real cost controls. But on a daily basis we find the mess left by the previous government and we are going to deal with that. But it borders on, at best, irresponsible and in some respects terribly—"misleading" is perhaps a word I can't use—a misrepresentation of the numbers.

Mr O'Toole: It's clear now—I can say this with some assurance—that when the member for Leeds-Grenville speaks, people listen. The responders today are an indication of how seriously they take his comments.

The member for Beaches-East York, a very respected member of the NDP, in fact one of the few members who are here, took the time to be here to comment. But when I think of the Chair of Management Board being here in an evening session—he knows the numbers, I give him credit. He knew there was a \$5-billion deficit, and what I just heard him say out of trepidation at the member for Leeds-Grenville's remarks is that tomorrow we're going to hear that there's a deficit. In fact, they're planning on having a bigger deficit. He's just added on the Hydro numbers. He's just added on the hospital deficit numbers. I think it may be a leak.

Laughter.

Mr O'Toole: No, it could be, because he's in the secret cabinet meetings, so he knows—he's Chair of Management Board. It just shows, if you want to route this back to the member for Leeds-Grenville, that when he speaks people listen. His 20-plus years' experience here have led me to believe that the people of Ontario elect us to govern going forward. They've been governing looking in the rear-view mirror. All we've heard about is the previous government. I'll give the members of government this opportunity: Yes, there was a bump in the road, and it may have been as much as \$2 billion, but the road goes forward. The road ahead is this: You have to make difficult decisions. That's the challenge before you, and the member for Leeds-Grenville has brought that to your attention. You're not up to the job.

Mr Pat Hoy (Chatham-Kent Essex): I'm pleased to rise in the few moments I have to make comment. I actually think that the Chair of Management Board has stated it so very well. I think we are going to learn a lot more about the mess and the mismanagement we have inherited from the previous Conservative government.

Members in both opposition parties have really railed against this debt of \$5.6 billion. They question that. I remind the viewers at home that it was not the Liberal Party that said it was \$5.6 billion. It was not our leader and it was not our finance minister who discovered this. It was not our management board chair or anyone with me here tonight, but it was the renowned and respected Mr Erik Peters who looked into the finances of this province and found that we are faced with a \$5.6-billion deficit. I think that members opposite should understand that it was not any of us on these benches who came forward with it. I am certain that if it had been one of the Liberal members who came into this House or to the press and said it was \$5.6 billion, they would have disagreed with that as well.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): Stop whining.

Mr Hoy: The member opposite said, “Quit whining.” When the Conservatives were in government, they blamed everybody: municipalities, school boards, the federal government, hospital directors, school board chairs. They had no accountability. They did not hold meetings with the groups that are important to Ontario, and I’m disgusted with the way they acted.

The Acting Speaker: I recognize the member for Leeds-Grenville with a two-minute response.

Mr Runciman: I appreciate the interventions of all members, even though some obviously don’t support my view of the world, and I understand that.

I would like to briefly respond to the Chair of Management Board’s comments. He and his colleagues make reference to rolling up their sleeves and getting down to work. Well, we have yet to witness them getting down to work. All we hear every day, ad nauseam, is the blame game, and we heard it again this evening. Instead of actually dealing with the fiscal challenge that everyone knew was facing them—and we would have faced it and we would have dealt with it—they’re simply blaming the former government rather than effectively dealing with it.

With respect to the Peters report, we know there are a whole range of very questionable areas that Mr Peters included, including the hydro debt, which historically has been separate from the government’s books, but again, he threw that in. We will witness tomorrow everything but the kitchen sink being thrown into this deficit projection.

The plan of this government is to inflate the deficit and then spend into it. I think we’ll hear from the Minister of Finance tomorrow: “The deficit is above \$6 billion, and we’re not going to do a damn thing about it except blame the former government and spend into that deficit and perhaps beyond.” That’s shameful, and Ontarians will pay for it for years and years to come.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Rosario Marchese (Trinity-Spadina): It’s great to have an opportunity to speak in this place. Just to tell the folks, it’s 7:20. Welcome to this political forum. We’re on live. Don’t change your channel. Throw everything out of your house, but keep your televisions on. My friend Michael Prue will be speaking after me, after the usual round, so don’t go away. There is a lot that we need to say here.

I want to start off by saying that a lot of the Liberal members, the new ones in particular, say, “We need to start working together and we need to be frank about things. We need to be as honest as we can be with each other.” I think that’s good. I think it’s a good thing to try to work in that way, as honestly as we can, as frankly as we can, with each other and with the public. My question to the new members and to the old Liberal members is, when does honesty begin and when does it end? Does it begin during an election campaign or does it begin when you get elected as a government? Those are important questions that need to be asked.

My point is that honesty with the public and with each other is always on the table, during an election campaign

and after, should you become the government. It doesn’t mean that once you get elected you begin as if you have this tabula rasa, from which you start all over again, and everything you’ve said and done in the past doesn’t count any more. That’s not the way it works, because people don’t forget what we said in this place.

Speaking of what people said in this place, I want to begin with my friend Gerry Phillips, now the Chair of Management Board. Here’s a unique problem to reflect on. Gerry Phillips said, in a June committee of estimates—Gerry, I don’t want to misquote you. You said something to the effect of, “I therefore take it that there is a \$5-billion risk in the budget.” That’s what the member always wants us to say. He said that during the Conservative reign there was a \$5-billion risk.

1920

You understand that Erik Peters, the man hired by the Liberals to assess the books, said just a couple months ago, whenever that was, that according to him and his review, the Liberals had in their hands a \$5.6-billion risk. Just to remind my friend Gerry, because I like Gerry, Erik Peters said it’s a \$5.6-billion risk. But, Michael, have you ever heard any Liberal refer to that as a risk?

Mr Prue: No.

Mr Marchese: What do they say?

Mr Prue: Deficit.

Mr Marchese: They say “deficit.” I have never heard one Liberal member in this assembly refer to the remarks of Erik Peters, a well-respected auditor—I liked Erik Peters when he criticized us when we were in government; he was doing his job. He did his job under the Tories; he’s doing his job under the Liberals—a very respected individual. He called it a \$5.6-billion risk, but every Liberal in the assembly never, ever refers to Erik Peters’s numbers as a risk. They refer to the numbers as a \$5.6-billion deficit.

By corollary, I would then say that if Liberals can refer to Mr Peters’s remarks as a deficit, given that he referred to them as a risk, I therefore too say that the remarks of Gerry Phillips, now the Chair of Management Board, apply. So Mr Phillips was correct when he said it was a \$5.6-billion risk/deficit. I don’t think there’s a disagreement with that. It’s hard to refute, given that every Liberal in this place refers to Mr Peters’s numbers as a deficit.

I throw this out to you, the general public watching this forum, so that when you hear some of the Liberal members say, “But I said it was a risk; I didn’t say it was a deficit,” Mr Peters’s remarks about the risk are that the Liberals called it a deficit. I just wanted to put that on the record.

What I want to put on the record as well is that when we say we need to be frank with each other, we need to be frank with each other prior to the election as well. As I look at all the election promises of the Liberal government, we need to review each and every one that has been broken. I want to do that as carefully and as slowly as I can, not for the benefit of the members here, but for the benefit of those who sometimes do not have the

luxury to have before them some of the remarks made by the Premier and other ministers in the election campaign.

During the election campaign Monsieur McGuinty, the now Premier, used to talk about how devastating the cuts that were made by the then Conservative government were to people around Ontario in every sector imaginable, be it education—elementary, secondary or post-secondary—be it health, be it environment, be it social services, culture, Ministry of Natural Resources. Whatever you can think of, he and we together attacked the Conservative government for the devastating cuts and how they affected our social structure and infrastructure in this province. He used to talk about the need to invest and reinvest, and now he says that cuts are on the table.

Promise made: “The Harris-Eves government tried to paper over problems, often problems of their own making, by taking the easy route of cutting public services in vital areas such as education, health care, water and food inspection. It’s time for a change”—Dalton McGuinty, Ottawa Citizen, Op-Ed, September 30, 2003. This was a mere couple of days before the election. He was reminding people that he would reinvest. It didn’t matter that Gerry Phillips then said, “There’s likely to be a \$5-billion risk/deficit.” It didn’t seem to matter then, but I would have worried. And even though many Liberals say and claim, naive though they may be, that the Tories claimed, not so naively, that there was no deficit, that the Liberals should have believed them is beyond my comprehension.

Many Liberals claim, in fact, that the Tories said there was no deficit, as if to suggest that they believed them. We didn’t believe them. Most Liberals I know didn’t believe them, or that. They knew there was a serious deficit that had to be dealt with, yet Liberals made promises, suggesting they would keep them no matter what. I say to you that you need to be held accountable for those promises. You can’t paper over them, as McGuinty said. You can’t do it. I will remind you as long as I can so that the public watching will be able to remember and not forget as we move forward and as we reflect on the throne speech that attempts to move us forward.

The promise broken is this: “We’re going to consider some ideas which to this point of time might have been on the list of the unmentionables, those things that might be unthinkable.... Inevitably, we’re talking about some (service) reductions.” That’s Premier Dalton McGuinty quoted by CP, November 21, 2003, a month and some days after getting elected. It didn’t take long.

I’ll remind you about the broken promise on the Oak Ridges moraine. I’ll remind you, good citizens, that Mr McGuinty, the Premier, is a lawyer. While some of you hold lawyers in higher regard than others, and I do too, one needs to reflect on what he said prior to the election, given his legal background, as a way of understanding what he said then and what he did later, leading you to question either one’s abilities or one’s motives. Prior to the election, Mr McGuinty said:

“The Eves government secretly approved a plan to built 6,600 new homes on one of the most sensitive spots

on the” Oak Ridges “moraine in Richmond Hill. We will stop their construction”—the Ontario Liberal plan for strong communities, 2003.

The broken promise: “The Liberal government has struck a deal with developers to allow the construction of more than 5,600 homes on the Oak Ridges moraine, reversing Dalton McGuinty’s election pledge to halt development on the environmentally sensitive area.”

Do you understand? Before the election, he was convinced that he would stop the construction of those homes on the Oak Ridges moraine. He and all of his members claimed that they would do that, including the member from Eglinton-Lawrence, who but mere days after the election was going around attacking the developers, saying they were going to stop the Oak Ridges moraine. Little did he know that no sooner than a couple of weeks later, the Premier would change his mind and declare his inability to stop the construction of those homes on the Oak Ridges moraine.

Now, if you were a lawyer, you would understand liabilities: expropriation, what it might cost to break a legal contract. I would think you would have all of that pretty well figured out. If you didn’t calculate that, then you would question the judgment of a lawyer in this case. If he did, you’d still question the judgment of that lawyer because in the end, he completely reversed himself. How does one do that? And what do those promises mean before an election? These are big promises. You understand, people elect us on the basis of the promises we make—not on what we will do once elected but on what we said prior to the election. That’s what matters. That’s what counts. Your promises and your words have to count for something. In these two specific instances, it counted for so very little. Mr Gerretson gets up and says, “At least it’s a better deal than what the Tories got.” Sorry, it’s only marginally better.

And all I say is that we said prior to the election that the Liberals are so closely connected to the developers—more so or as much as the Tories—that they won’t be able to break that deal. Liberals are closely associated with developers. People ought to know that. We knew McGuinty couldn’t keep that promise, except many of you believed him. That’s what you get.

1930

Let me move on to other promises. On the issue of immediate funding for education, the promise made by Mr McGuinty and others: “It’s time to put kids first by tackling crises in our education system that demand immediate attention.” That was Dalton McGuinty.

“Mr Eves and his budgets created these problems. Students need them tackled now. They can’t wait for more reviews and more rhetoric from the government.” That was a press release from the office of Dalton McGuinty, June 3, 2003.

The broken promise: “Where was any mention of Rozanski in the throne speech?” asked Annie Kidder, spokesperson for the parent advocacy group People for Education. Where was anything that could help the 40,000 children on waiting lists for special education, or

the 122 schools right across the province being considered for closing. "Are we saying," she says, "children need to wait for the deficit to be reduced before we can help them?" Yes, Annie, that's what they're saying.

One of the most important promises they made on education was that they would reduce class sizes in grades 1, 2 and 3—although they say JK and SK as well—to 20. We said that promise would cost \$400 million to \$1 billion. Unless new money came into the province from new sources, Liberals could not keep that promise. I said that in debates with Mr Smitherman on one of the regular programs we had—it was counterSpin. George mocked me that day when he said, "Oh, yes, we are." He kept interrupting me three times, "Oh, yes, we are." We said, "George, you can't do it. You can't keep your promise." Someone was lying on that, right? It wasn't me. They couldn't do it. Now they're in government and they say, "Oops, there's a \$5.6-billion risk, a so-called deficit, but we won't call it that—or we will call it that because that's OK and we won't be able to do anything."

The 40,000 students waiting for special education, those who are in the most terrible need of attention, might just have to wait a little longer. But that was OK for Mr Kennedy, the then-Liberal Party education critic, to say day in and day out, like Marchese, "We've got to get rid of that waiting list for special education students. It's simply wrong, unjust to those who desperately need help." No sooner do they get in government than they might not be able to find the money to do it.

Understand, listeners, these are promises that were made that I am sure persuaded you that the Liberals were on the right track and that they were representing your wishes well. Many of you supported them on the basis of those promises. How do you feel about them now? How do you feel about the Minister of Education, Mr Kennedy, going around announcing that there will be a moratorium on school closures?

Mr Hoy: Good idea.

Mr Marchese: Pat Hoy says, "Good idea." I agree. Except there is no money. How can you keep schools open where he, the Minister of Education—and I agree, and Pat Hoy too, on the value of keeping small schools open. But the Minister of Education simply doesn't flow the money, and he says there won't be any money. But he declares and sends the demand by fiat that schools will not close.

I say to you and I say to him and I say to all of you, we can only keep schools open if money flows from this government and this minister to keep schools open this year. Money has already been allocated for our schools. Come September, unless there is new money, there will be some boards that will decide, "Without new money we can't afford to keep the school open," not, "Because Mr Kennedy says we shall, we will." There is no new money, and all of those promises that sounded so good then are so hollow now.

The energy cap—the cap on the cap: So many of the members said, "Why, when we were in opposition we

supported the cap on our energy bills because we were trying to protect seniors." Oh? If it was good to protect seniors then, as we were building up our debt with close to \$800 million that we will have to pay, that our children will have to pay, we no longer want to help seniors when we increase the cap, which forces seniors to pay a little more on their hydro, without any talk about how we're going to deal with the privatization and deregulation of our hydro services? You believe you're helping seniors now by increasing their costs but you couldn't do it before the election, because then you wanted to help them, but you can't or you won't or you think it's unreasonable, that now that you are in government you are responsible and need to be careful and judicious with the way you spend money, but it was OK in opposition to say differently. You understand the problem; you've got big problems. People are not going to forget. You've created such a terrible mood for yourselves that you're not going to be able to shake it.

By the way, speaking to the tax credit, New Democrats oppose the tax credit for private schools, each and every one of us is strongly opposed, but you've come up with the idea of doing it retroactively. Some of you trustees and others, how do you find it politically advantageous to go back into people's pockets from two years past? When you're intelligent, what you should be doing is saying, "Henceforth, people won't be getting the benefit of the tax credit any longer." But to say, "Well, we were against the tax credit from the beginning, and we're going to go back and pick those people's pockets from two years ago," when people have made arrangements for whatever monies they have in their pocket—to say that's justifiable, I'm telling you, you have made a big political error. You have broken so many promises that it is my job as a New Democrat, and the job of those of us here, to remind each and every one of you that you can't begin a new slate unless you take responsibility for those broken promises of the past.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Kuldip Kular (Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale): As I get up to talk about the throne speech, I just want to remind the member for Trinity-Spadina that on October 2 the people of Ontario decided in favour of a positive change. They told us, and they gave us a mandate, to fix health care delivery in Ontario. Approximately one million people in Ontario do not have a family doctor. As a family doctor, I'm very well aware of the fact that Ontarians did not get the health care they deserved during the past eight years. A couple of weeks ago, our government renegotiated a contract to build a P3 hospital—P3 means publicly owned, publicly controlled and publicly accountable—in my own riding of Bramalea-Gore-Malton-Springdale.

On October 2, Ontarians also told us to fix their public school system. As this government's commitment, we are cancelling the private school tax credit. This way, our government would be able to fund public schools with more money. The other day the Honourable Minister of Education announced in Mississauga that he's going to give \$120 million as a new fund to the schools. This is

the promise. Dalton McGuinty's government is going to keep its commitments.

1940

Mr Garfield Dunlop (Simcoe North): I'd like to congratulate the member from Trinity-Spadina on his speech. Once again, as I've said a number of times in this House, he's one of our most colourful speakers. I didn't hear him refer to the clock tonight. Usually he says—

Mr Marchese: I did.

Mr Dunlop: Did you? I'm sorry. He usually refers to the audience and tells them what time it is and then leads off with his speech after that.

I think I'd like to talk a little bit about the throne speech—I've mentioned this in the hits before—particularly involving the almost non-existence of the mentioning of rural Ontario in the throne speech. When you think about the diversity—

Hon Steve Peters (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Go review your own throne speech.

Mr Dunlop: I hear the Minister of Agriculture heckling me over there right now. I'll be interested to see if there are any healthy futures programs or OSTAR recreation programs for rural Ontario municipalities in the next four years. Let's keep a close eye on that. We're looking at a government of 23 cabinet ministers, 21 from cities in the province of Ontario. Even the Minister of Agriculture represents part of the city of London. He's not a rural member. He's upset most of the agricultural communities and the stakeholders already and he's been there for less than two months. Less than two months and you've upset them—simple as that.

I just want to say to the people at home that in the throne speech this government did not relate at all to the citizens of rural Ontario municipalities, which represent 99% of the geography of our great province. As we look forward in the next four years, it will be very interesting to see what programs rural Ontario municipalities and rural Ontario citizens are included in.

Interjections.

Mr Prue: I hope to be heard above the din of all the people arguing back and forth about who the best rural member is.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Members of the House—member for Simcoe North, please. Minister of Community and Social Services, please.

Can you restore two minutes to the clock?

Mr Prue: I will try again, as the members argue back and forth about who the best rural representative is.

I am here to talk tonight about my colleague Rosario Marchese, the member from Trinity-Spadina, and the absolutely phenomenal job he always does when he stands up in this House. He speaks with passion, he speaks with conviction, he speaks with knowledge, and while he's doing all of that, he's quite entertaining to watch. I know there is a whole cadre of people out there who watch him and comment about what he has to say each and every time. He has his own little fan club in the

province of Ontario. But I think what he talked about bears some discussion.

He talked about some of the problems with this government and what it's doing wrong. I'd like to go back again to the whole issue of retroactivity. What this government is doing—and I will say again and again that I firmly and with all my heart believe that the school credit should be cancelled. I campaigned on that, I went door to door on that, I explained that and I believe that. But this government has thrown a wrench into what otherwise would be a very good program and campaign promise. They have done it retroactively. They have done a law that no Parliament in this country has ever done successfully. Every government that has ever tried to pass retroactive laws has found out that they have failed in the end, because what you do is make illegal one day that which was perfectly legal while the people carried it out. You have taken away a benefit one day that people had come to expect because the law was the law. It takes away from the rule of law in this country, and it cannot be condoned. I am asking the members opposite to listen carefully to what Mr Marchese had to say and think very carefully before that final step is taken.

Mr Kim Craiton (Niagara Falls): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to make some comments to my colleague from Trinity-Spadina. I listened intently to some of the comments you made, but I think the first comment that caught my attention was your definition of honesty: Is it before the election or after the election? I would say to you that I think, for every member in this House, myself included, honesty has always been before or after. We didn't come in dishonest and we're not going to leave dishonest.

We talk about this deficit over and over, and I truly believe it exists, but I will tell you that for many of us—and I've talked to a number of my colleagues who have come out of municipal or regional government. For myself, it wasn't about running because there was a deficit, it was about watching for 13 years on city council, and for the last five or six years, the destruction that we felt was happening in our own municipalities: the line-ups in the hospitals, the doctor shortages—I think we were rated two or three in all Ontario for doctor shortages—the transfer payments cut for our transit system, the closure of our driver's licence office, and our seniors—talking about seniors—had to go all the way to St Catharines. I think those were the kinds of things that motivated a lot of us—I know myself—to be here.

In terms of the throne speech, the foundation is the key to any government, whether it's municipal or provincial. The throne speech is a direction that I want to go in. I sure didn't want to go in the same direction that I've watched for the last seven or eight years with the former government. I knew what was going to continue. So yes, I'm proud to be here and I'm proud of the throne speech. There's always room for improvement. Nothing is perfect in this world, but this speech and the direction our government is going in is the right direction. I don't have any problems going back home to Niagara Falls,

Niagara-on-the-Lake, and standing up and saying to the people, "Here's why I'm supporting some of the changes we've had to make because of our financial situation."

The Acting Speaker: That concludes questions and comments. I now return to the member for Trinity-Spadina for a two-minute response.

Mr Marchese: As usual, I thank friends, and foes as well, for their comments. I would say to the good doctor from Bramalea-Gore that it's true people voted for change. I agree with that, but they voted for change according to the promises they heard from you and your leader. They didn't just simply say, "We're voting for change," without knowing what that change might include. They voted for change on the basis of what you said around many of the important issues that I talked about. And when you break them, it's tough. I'm saying you broke quite a number of them.

I say to the member from Niagara Falls, yes, you promised a lot of things that are costly and that will include new investments. I'm telling you we've seen very little investment. The \$112 million that has been promised by the Minister of Education for literacy programs and ESL programs, some of that money, if not most of the money, is probably going to deal with the problem they've had for many, many years: deficits. The Toronto board is being told they can use that money to deal with their deficit—not wash away the deficit due to the underfunding by previous governments, but that they will be able to use that money for ESL and literacy programs so desperately needed by Toronto. For that, they'll be able to use it to deal with their deficit. I tell you that's wrong. It's a serious mistake.

When the member from Simcoe North talks about rural communities, there's nothing here for cities. Most of the people live in cities; 70% to 80% of people now live in cities. There is absolutely not one cent going to our cities to help them out with their deficit problems. The city of Toronto is desperately waiting for your two cents from the gasoline tax to help them with their \$350-million problem. Due to the downloading by the Conservative government, there's nothing in it for them. You've got to deal with your broken promises in order to move ahead. Unless you do that, you won't be able to go ahead.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Jeff Leal (Peterborough): I'm pleased to be here tonight for my inaugural address to the Ontario Legislature. First of all, I would like to congratulate Alvin Curling, our new Speaker, and you, the member from Waterloo-Wellington, who are in the Chair this evening. I'd also like to offer congratulations to all 103 members of the provincial Parliament on their election wins.

I bring to this House 18 years of municipal experience. I was first elected to Peterborough city council in 1985. Through my duties as a councillor, I've served as chairperson of the city's social services committee, as well as second deputy mayor. I was born and raised in the community I represent. I attended elementary, high school and even university within Peterborough's city limits.

I've been married to my wife Karan for nine years and have two young children, Braden and Shanae.

After serving on city council, I look forward to representing not only this city but also the county of Peterborough, in my capacity as MPP. Peterborough riding is located about a 140 kilometres northeast of where I stand today at Queen's Park. It is an economically diverse riding, a blend of urban and rural populations. Outside the city of Peterborough you find many picturesque villages and hamlets surrounded by a patchwork of farms. The Peterborough riding is home of Kawartha Lakes, the heart of the Trent-Severn Waterway system. Each year, boaters and tourists from every corner of the globe visit my riding to enjoy its scenic beauty and take part in recreational activities. Boating and fishing are favourites in the summer. The winter brings snow and hundreds of kilometres of trails for skiing and snowmobiling.

1950

The city, which has a population of about 74,000, is home to a strong industrial sector. This includes companies such as General Electric Peterborough and Quaker Oats. There are smaller success stories as well. Ventra Plastics and Minute Maid have recently announced expansions of their operations in Peterborough.

Peterborough boasts some reputable public institutions as well. Two renowned post-secondary schools, Trent University and Sir Sandford Fleming College, call the city of Peterborough their home. The schools have worked together on a number of partnerships to better the education of their students. I hope I can serve my riding as well as my predecessors. Former MPPs Gary Stewart, Jenny Carter, Peter Adams, Gillian Sandeman, Harold Scott, Keith Brown, John Turner and Walter Pitman all worked diligently to serve their constituents no matter what their political stripe.

I would be remiss if I didn't make a few comments about my predecessor, Mr Stewart. While Mr Stewart and I didn't share the same political philosophy, Mr Stewart and I did share the view that we've tried to do our best in public life for the citizens of Peterborough. Mr Stewart was very involved in some key projects within my community, moving the hospital project forward, the widening of several highways in the Peterborough area, and some expansions to both Sir Sandford Fleming College and Trent University.

My friends in the NDP may want to know about Walter Pitman. He was the first NDP MP ever elected to Parliament in Ottawa in 1960, after the amalgamation of the Canadian Labour Congress and the CCF. Many issues that these former Peterborough MPPs faced are still relevant today. In March 1968, Pitman described the riding as follows:

"I do want to suggest to you that obviously I do not need to say anything more about the beauty of the constituency that I represent other than this. It has a strong industrial centre and reacts very quickly to changes in technology and trade. It is also an agrarian community, which makes my concern about agriculture very real. We

even have air pollution. This may seem unimaginable, but we do have pockets of air pollution in an area such as Peterborough.”

Pitman spoke at great length about fostering region development. He said, “It is up to the government to see that all regions are developed in accordance with an orderly plan, which would include environmental and economic considerations.” Thirty-five years later, this is still true. We need to advocate measured development that avoids urban sprawl and allows for environmental and transportation concerns.

Pitman continued, “Well, how large do we want our cities to be? Here is one of the major problems in our society. We are, in Ontario, starting to move toward some form, some have suggested, of megalopolis, which now stretches from Hamilton to Oshawa, and may very well stretch some day from Windsor to Kingston.” While Pitman’s prediction of a megacity stretching across the northern shores of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario may not come to fruition, it lends itself to the role the Peterborough riding will play in the future.

As a community, Peterborough has discussed and debated how it views itself in relation to the expanding borders of the GTA. Does Peterborough want to try to remain a distinct region capable of surviving on its own, or does the region want to take advantage of the GTA’s revved-up economic engine and welcome commuter development?

Peterborough MPP John Turner—I’ll note that John Turner was the Speaker of this House from 1981 to 1985, and John and June are close personal friends of mine—touched on this issue in a March 1972 speech to the Legislature when he said, “We must appreciate whether or not Peterborough is to remain as a periphery area and is not to develop; or, if the city of Peterborough is to develop, to what extent and in what respect.”

Turner suggested continuing to develop Peterborough’s industrial base, but at the same time he envisioned sharing Peterborough’s scenic geography with others. “Within the recreational designation for this area, thinking must go beyond cottage development. We must be looking at the development of resort activities, and these resort activities should be promoted for year-round operation,” Turner said. “I would suggest, Mr Speaker, that the industrial and commercial aspects of the city of Peterborough could and should be developed along the parallel course with our natural and beautiful resort areas. But the priority should be placed on commercial and industrial development, which would continue to employ our highly skilled people.

“At the same time, our natural resource areas could be developed to provide the recreational facilities not only for our own people but also for the ever-increasing numbers of people who are discovering the beauties of the Kawartha Lakes region.”

I would suggest that this is the reality of the greater Peterborough area today. The city has a strong industrial and commercial sector. At the same time, a 10- to 20-minute drive outside the city leads to the wide array of recreational activities I previously mentioned.

Sixteen years ago, MPP Peter Adams, who is now our federal member, spoke of “the proper development of central and eastern Ontario.” The GO Transit link to Oshawa and the completion of Highway 115 were two key transportation links Adams addressed. These routes are important to the greater Peterborough area and are important aspects of economic growth.

Construction is beginning on the new Peterborough Regional Health Centre. Slated for completion in 2007, the hospital will continue to provide quality health to area residents.

Looking ahead to my role as an MPP, there are some exciting events occurring in Peterborough riding. Centennial celebrations for the Trent-Severn Waterway lift lock are scheduled for July 9 to 11, 2004. And 2004 marks the 100th anniversary of the opening of the world’s highest hydraulic lift lock. At 65 feet, it was and still is one of the engineering marvels of the world. I’d like to note that there are three lift locks in existence: one of the others exists in Kirkfield, Ontario, and the other is located in Germany.

I’d also like to share one new project that has garnered a lot of positive buzz in the Peterborough area: the planned DNA cluster, which would bring together our public institutions and the private sector to further genetic research.

But I’m not only looking forward to the upcoming events in my riding; I also look forward to debates in this House.

Education is a key issue of the new Liberal government. A commitment to public education is this government’s most important priority.

A strong foundation for our children’s future is vital as they will be the leaders of tomorrow. One of the aspects of this government’s commitment to public education is character education. This is a program well underway in the Peterborough riding. Last spring, the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, under the direction of Dr Avis Glaze, introduced character education to our community. Parents, teachers, students and community leaders have met several times to define citizenship values to teach in our area schools. Implementing character education province-wide will benefit our children and our communities as a whole. A commitment to safer schools goes hand in hand with this. Setting up a provincial anti-bullying hotline is a good start.

This government has also committed to improving the reading, writing and math skills of our children. With two young children currently in Ontario’s public education system, I can rest better knowing I am working toward making Ontario’s education system the best in Canada and indeed around the world.

On the upper end, this government’s move to freeze post-secondary tuition rates will allow graduates to emerge with less debt. They will then begin to contribute more efficiently to the economy more quickly.

We must be vigilant, not only in the protection of our children’s education but also in preserving and improving our quality of life. Former MPP Jenny Carter addressed this in 1990:

“My constituents are worried about jobs and taxes, about affordable housing, about health services and child care and about the environment. Last summer, beaches were closed more often than they were open. Our urban forest of maple trees is dying. The health and safety of workers is not as well-protected as it should be. Waste disposal problems are acute, particularly in the townships. Environmental problems are no abstraction to my constituents. They lower the quality of life and discourage tourists.”

This government's commitment to growing stronger communities through cleaner air and water, halting urban sprawl and introducing more green spaces is something I am proud to work toward.

I wish each and every one of us in this House this evening the best of luck. I look forward to meeting and working with you over the next four years.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Cameron Jackson (Burlington): First of all, I want to acknowledge and commend the member for Peterborough on his maiden speech in the House. It was 19 years ago that I did mine, and I was successful in reading it very carefully as well. I do want to welcome him to the House. His riding, as he noted in his comments, has brought some very interesting, colourful and committed individuals to this House. Interestingly enough, Peterborough is notorious for electing individuals whenever there is a strong headwind for any given political party. So I truly and sincerely hope the member opposite enjoys his four years here.

2000

The throne speech, which was supposed to be the subject of tonight's debate, will impact the people of Peterborough. I can only believe there must have been a few phone calls after the throne speech to the honourable member opposite from his hospital asking why there was nothing in the throne speech to offer them some encouragement with the health needs of Peterborough. I'm sure he got calls from teachers who, almost to a person, probably took a lawn sign for him and are then wondering, “Why did you lecture us in the throne speech and tell us, ‘We'll ask our partners in health care, education and the broader public sector to temper their requests for more, with the realization that what we have now is at risk?’” I'm sure the member opposite would like to have used his full 20 minutes to explain to those teachers, those physicians and the medical community why there was nothing in the throne speech for them.

Mr Prue: I listened with great interest to the member from Peterborough. We share some mutual friends in Peterborough. I often travel to that town. As a matter of fact, more often than not I'd like to say I travel through that town, but since you built 115, which you talked about, you can take it to Highway 7 and up 134 and come out at Lakefield, and you never see Peterborough any more. I'm not sure that was the best thing for the city of Peterborough, because the downtown core of Peterborough is lovely. It is one of the nicest communities in all of Ontario. It has magnificent old houses, tree-lined

streets, friendly neighbourhoods, but often people who are travelling to cottage country and recreation areas beyond Peterborough, as I do, never get a chance to really see it any more.

I would like to commend the member from Peterborough for his first speech in this House. I would like to commend him for what he had to say about a little bit of the history of that community, and the history that has changed over time. It was at one point, I would suggest, quite an industrialized town. Unfortunately much of the industry that once made Peterborough a great and prosperous community is starting to leave, and Peterborough residents are having to find other sources of income, whether from the recreation community, from drug manufacturing or from things that are not traditional.

I commend him for having been elected, and want to tell him that he should work very hard, because if his goal in this Legislature is to work for the betterment of education, if that is his sole claim to fame at the end of four years when he goes back to the electorate, if he chooses to do so, then I think he would have done the right thing for the citizens of Peterborough, as he might have done the right thing for any number of towns and cities in this province. Our education system has been in a shambles. It needs to be fixed, and if that is your priority, sir, it is a good one.

Mr O'Toole: I couldn't resolve not to speak on this important maiden speech from the member from Peterborough. I was born in Peterborough, as he would know, and know many of the same people he does. But it would be remiss of me not to respect a member from Peterborough, my great friend Gary Stewart. I did watch, while I was in the office preparing for my one-hour speech, and you did credit many things to Gary Stewart. Hopefully, your government will continue those. I heard Mr Smitherman commit, in a question from you, that that project—and the administrator was there today. He did meet with the minister, and I did speak with him as well at lunch.

I would only say there are many issues in Peterborough, but even more clear to me—I just wanted to say hello to my mother-in-law, Madge Hall, who might be viewing tonight, because she's now a resident of a retirement home. The retirement home is Jackson's Creek in Peterborough. It's a very nice retirement home. In fact, I hope she's comfortably situated there, because she did have difficult times and did receive extremely good treatment at the Peterborough Regional Health Centre as well as at St Joseph's rehab centre. She's been through a trying time. My heart is in Peterborough, and many of my relatives are there.

There is one issue: You're probably lucky to have recently left the Peterborough council, because they still haven't resolved the parkway issue. As you know, this issue will go on and on. In fact, I could say my uncle, Jack Doris, was the mayor of Peterborough, as you might know. Jack was one of the mayors who could have made a difference, and chose to listen to the people and not do anything. But nonetheless, thank you for your speech. It was timely and accurate.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Timmins-James Bay): That was a wonderful speech. I want to congratulate the member.

The Acting Speaker: I now recognize the member for Peterborough. You have two minutes to reply.

Mr Leal: Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Jackson: I'm very pleased to be able to offer up some comments and concerns as expressed in this new government's first throne speech since they had this opportunity back in 1985. I remember that because that's the year I entered the Legislature. Within the first few months we had been treated to two throne speeches: one from Frank Miller, who actually won that election, and then a second one from David Peterson as he forged his coalition with the NDP. He had, as we know, two throne speeches, the other in 1987.

Before I begin, I want to put on the record a concern that I have, and I want to put it on up front, because I consider it a serious concern. Members of this House will be aware that I am a monarchist and I support the role of the monarchy in our parliamentary traditions in the full context. The media have acknowledged that this is one of the most political throne speeches that we have seen in many years. That has been amply demonstrated by the number of references criticizing the former government. Instead of looking in the rear-view mirror, this province has been very much accustomed to looking forward to the challenges that are ahead and to the opportunity to bring Ontario's case forward for more prosperity. But this was a unique throne speech, because it was riddled with criticism and impugned motives.

As I think has been mentioned once in the House, when our government of Mike Harris inherited the authority to serve as the government, we inherited a \$10-billion deficit. It was only referenced once in our throne speech—only once. The point was made, and the balance of that throne speech, almost the exact number of pages as contained in the Liberal throne speech, set out a course of action so that we could give Ontarians hope, opportunity and prosperity. That's what Ontarians have become accustomed to. That is not what we got from the Liberals. In fact, they referred to their inherited deficit, or their manufactured deficit, a total of 21 times in an 18-page document.

2010

I listened very intently. As you know, I sit closest to the Speaker, with the exception of my friend and colleague the government House leader. He and I sit closer to the Speaker than any other individuals in the House. So I was able to hear very clearly something which did not appear in the published text that was submitted to the public but which was contained in the final copy of Lieutenant Governor Bartleman's speech. I still have my notes from that day. There's the actual Votes and Proceedings. It's very thin, because all it was was the throne speech, and I had wrote my notes.

The Lieutenant Governor, as I said earlier, is the Queen's representative here in Ontario. This government actually made the Lieutenant Governor read a statement

that in this province the notion that we would support the education of minority groups was, in the words of the government—forcing the Lieutenant Governor to say it—a “reckless private school tax credit.” That is not in the original text that was published, but it is in the Hansard. I was offended by that. I was deeply offended by that. I was offended by it because the monarchy has been a tempering and sobering element in our democracy.

It was the monarchy that spoke out very dramatically against slavery. We were the first jurisdiction in North America to create a bill of rights for citizens for human rights, our Human Rights Code. Ontario seems to have been the model for tolerance, for understanding and for diversity, and yet we have a government which is literally, on the one hand, referring to our party as being bigots and racists simply because we have a policy to deal with persons who are in this province illegally and who are conducting criminal activity; and yet, on the government side, they imply that our policies are discriminatory against the public school system. It's rather disturbing and upsetting.

I have spoken in mosques. I have spoken in Jewish temples. I have been an advocate for the equality of access to education for children in this province. I believe that it builds on our diversity and builds on our sense of what makes Ontario unique. If I were to be asked what is the one thing in this throne speech which—yet it wasn't a surprise. I'm disappointed. It's been documented that the retroactivity of it is punitive, that it has seldom ever been seen by governments anywhere in Canada. And yet this government saw fit to punish these families in a most severe and alarming way and to do it almost as if they were doing the province a great favour because somehow we were breeding intolerance because we had reached out to the diversity community in this province. I wanted it on the record that I felt it was inappropriate and almost an abuse of the privilege of governing to have a throne speech to asking Lieutenant Governor, the Queen's representative, to refer to this element of Ontario life as “reckless.” I just reject that.

The throne speech was on November 20, but the precursor to the throne speech in this province was the fact that the McGuinty government, fresh from its election victory on October 2, on or about October 20 broke its first promise, and that was that they weren't going to hire private consultants. They promptly went out and hired one Erik Peters, who is a retired civil servant. The records will show that many of the consultants our government hired were retired civil servants. When I was a minister, I hired a couple of senior ministry officials who had retired. They were experts in their field, and frankly they were able to get the job done at twice the speed and half the price for their work in long-term care.

Having said that, Mr Peters, as a private consultant at \$1,500 a day, was brought in to give an opinion. First of all, I want to read from Erik Peters's report, their private, highly paid consultant. He says, “As agreed, I have carried out a review, which does not constitute an audit,

of a comparison between the budget for 2003-04, released on March 27, 2003, and the fiscal update for 2003-04 prepared by the Ministry of Finance as of October 24, 2003." This is a snapshot with almost six months left of the fiscal year.

His report goes on to say, "I express no opinion as to what the actual deficit for the year ending March 31, 2004 will be." Somehow, between Eric Peters's report, which was tabled with the media on October 29, and the November 19 throne speech, the Liberals have been successful in managing the media and creating this mystique that the actual deficit of this province is \$5.6 billion.

Rather than spend time in their throne speech talking about what they intend to do about it, they spent most of their time suggesting and impugning motive about the spending of the previous government. On careful examination, one should note that there are some very clear differences between the current government and our former government. The throne speech, if you read between the lines, clearly demonstrates this. For example, our government made a commitment to the Rozanski report and we began implementing it. We began fully funding it. In fact, we were advancing the funds at a rate greater than Rozanski had even suggested we might. He gave us a five-year window. During the course of that five years we had pledged, and were funding, at the rate of almost \$2 billion more.

The Liberals promised that the most they would contribute was \$1.6 billion. So, clearly, the citizens of Ontario felt that they could support the Liberal government as their new government and expect less in education funding in our elementary and secondary schools. Remember, we were pledging more dollars to our school system than the Liberals and we were pledging to provide an equity in education tax credit for families who were providing or obtaining education on the basis of their faith or cultural conviction—there were thousands of families.

We now know that the true cost of that was somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$40 to \$50 million, not the \$450 million that the government suggested. I do recall that the Liberals, at every campaign meeting and every political forum, were saying, "There's \$450 million that we can put into public education." Now, did they do that during the throne speech? No. What they did was honour a political promise they made to the teachers of Ontario, who told their former friends the NDP, "Sorry, we're not going to support you. We're going to be putting all our support behind the Liberals, because they have promised us a couple of things." They did honour their promise to the teachers of Ontario.

They eliminated a balance in the College of Teachers. They are going to hand that institution over to the teachers' federation. They are not going to allow it to be a balanced public and teaching profession. They will pay a price for that, given the fact that it disciplines individuals. That's the system we have for doctors, when doctors are involved in inappropriate behaviour that puts

their patients at risk. Teachers, from time to time—and fortunately in this province, very few—put their students at risk. It is important to have a balance between public members and professional teachers, but this union has secured a promise from the McGuinty government and that was honoured in the throne speech.

They have agreed again to eliminate the need for teachers to do upgrading in the College of Teachers, and for teacher testing. In fairness, I have suggested and have encouraged that we work an accommodation so the teachers can do this during professional activity days, but I still support the principle that all professionals require professional upgrading from time to time. I didn't think it was appropriate that we make them do it after hours, on weekends and during summer holidays. Having said that, those were really the only two commitments that the McGuinty government made to public education: to sort of pay off the teachers for the proliferation of lawn signs. I have to tell you, my favourite lawn sign for the Liberals came out in the last week. It was a picture of Dalton McGuinty, and there were two of them. One of our campaign workers came in and said, "Look at that. There's the two faces of Dalton McGuinty." I thought, what a wonderful observation, what an innocent observation from a young person working on our campaign, that they already figured out that Dalton McGuinty was two-faced, to quote them directly.

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The fact of the matter is, the throne speech came up short in many areas. The Liberal candidate who ran against me promised quite openly that he was aware of the deficit at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital. He said, with absolute certainty, "A Dalton McGuinty government will pay that deficit, no problem; vote for me," and he got a lot of votes on that. Yet today in the House we heard the Treasurer acting very surprised, and the Chair of Management Board apparently completely unaware, that hospitals had any deficits in this province, last year or this year. It was a surprise that they were shocked by this revelation, when I've certainly been to functions with the Ontario Hospital Association and I've spoken with my own hospital. Was there anything in this throne speech for them? No, not at all.

There's another angle to this throne speech which is of concern. The Liberals made three income promises during the election. They promised a minimum wage increase and they promised an increase in welfare payments for income support for welfare recipients. The third one was ODSP, the Ontario Disability Support Program. Interestingly, only one of these was mentioned in the throne speech, being the increase in the minimum wage. If we honestly and objectively analyze what these three income promises were, you'll notice that the Liberals have only implemented the one they don't have to pay for. They don't have to pay for a minimum wage increase. They have to ask the private sector to pay increased wages, and then it has to get that back by increasing prices, which as we know will adversely affect low-income people.

The second group, Ontarians with disabilities—if the Conservative government of Ernie Eves had been elected, all disabled persons in this province would have received an increase in income support on January 1. Under the Liberals, they're not going to get that. In fact, they're actually going to get an increase in their taxes. So the spending power of a person on disability actually goes down under the first year of a Liberal government instead of going up further as it would with a Conservative government.

Interestingly enough, they've punished persons with low income by clawing back the seniors' tax credit as well as the income tax credit. They have failed to provide protection for persons on low income. In fact, they've actually added people of low income on to the tax rolls. As you know, our government, through successive tax cuts, had taken almost 800,000 people off the tax rolls and there are some 150,000 people in Ontario who pay federal income taxes but don't pay any provincial taxes because we've been lowering our taxes. Under the Liberals, they have increased taxes. We pleaded with the Minister of Finance, "Please provide some adjustment or protection for low-income persons as you increase their taxes," but those pleas fell on deaf ears, unfortunately.

The third group, those on social assistance, are of concern to us all, partially because the province doesn't pay for this; municipalities pay for this. As most members of this House know, and most people watching know, for this government to honour its promise to provide more income for persons on social assistance, they will have to increase property taxes, and increase them rather substantively. They didn't mention that, nor did they come to the assistance of the poor in their first year, in their first throne speech. Why? Because they have been unable to flow new dollars to municipalities.

We all know today that one of the main ways they're going to be able to do that is because they have removed the cap on hydro rates, which should have stayed frozen until 2006. This is going to cost consumers close to \$1 billion just on their consumption of energy and another \$1 billion on their fees and schedule of costs. That is going to be soaked up as profit and expenses, with a guaranteed profit for distribution companies, most of which are municipally owned. They are going to be able to use their hydro utility as a slush fund to pay for other things, whether it's their welfare payments or whatever.

Not only did this throne speech break a lot of promises, not only did it break trust with the people of Ontario, not only did it not honour the priorities of health care and education reinvestment, it seemed to have paid off some political debts and engaged in a process of propaganda about the size of Ontario's manufactured deficit. The deficit is not the size it is. In fact, there's a quote in today's National Post from the organization that deals with fair taxation that clearly states that Ontario's true debt could be as low as \$600 million. If this government would do its job, we could balance the budget.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr O'Toole: I couldn't resist the opportunity to stand in respect for the member from Burlington, who I'm surprised didn't say more about the energy bill, but he did manage to work in some time on the broken promises that all of us are aware of. I see there are still a few members of the government here.

For the record, just a couple of things: I think it's important to note that the article this morning in the National Post is worth referring to. The title is "Ontario's deficit cut down to size," for those viewing tonight, who may include—dare I mention the names of some of my constituents?—Henry Downing, who is just recovering. To all of my constituents, I wish a merry Christmas, because I may not get another chance to speak. Often, I'm limited in the opportunities to speak.

I see Mr Sorbara's here. He has been out most of the night, but he's here now signing Christmas cards. He should be working on the budget, really, because there's more work to be done. He could take some numbers out. He could get some of the numbers out of the budget if he tried. It's clear that the revenues are up but the will is down. The will is not there to actually deal with the deficit. I'm waiting for tomorrow to see what you add as an excuse—I want to put it on the record—to grow the deficit.

There are only a couple of minutes left—28 seconds—but I think it's important that all members at this time of year want to work harmoniously. It's clear that Mr Jackson, who conceivably has a very good shot at being a leader—I would say that I'm watching, because there's so much talent on this side of the House. The people of Ontario need more to be done, and we on this side can do it.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Burlington has two minutes to reply.

Mr Jackson: I want to thank the members opposite for commenting on my speech. If it wasn't in the form of the two-minute rebuttal, at least it was an interjection.

I just want to reiterate that there are so many additional revenue opportunities available to this government that were not included in Erik Peters's report. Therefore, I think people were shortchanged in the throne speech. There is the potential for this government to invest in children's services, in our health care system and in our educational system. They did not account for the \$700 million that was—

Applause.

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Mr Jackson: You guys just want to go home. I want to get this on the record. It's my moment to raise some concerns for my constituents in Burlington. My constituents in Burlington are concerned that they've received \$700 million more from the federal government on the Canada health transfers that Erik Peters refused to acknowledge and this Treasurer refuses to acknowledge. Income taxes for corporations in this province are up \$300 million. The full value of the Teranet sale is worth a further \$200 million. There are supplementary payments from SARS, a full accounting of over \$330 million.

These are issues where, if the government didn't misrepresent the figures—which is something the member from Management Board said earlier—we could be on target to being close to balancing the books and therefore we could get on with the important business of making health care a priority again in this province.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Khalil Ramal (London-Fanshawe): On behalf of the people of my riding, London-Fanshawe, it's my duty and pleasure to speak today in support of the throne speech. Because the boundary of my riding was established in 1999, I am the first Liberal to represent London-Fanshawe in the Legislature—although I would like to assure the members of this House that I have every intention of setting a long-standing precedent. I would also like to assure the members that it is my intention to represent and voice the needs and concerns of my constituents to the very best of my ability.

If I may, I would like to take a moment to thank my predecessor from London-Fanshawe, Frank Mazzilli, for his work at Queen's Park. Frank was a police officer for 17 years in London and was elected to this Legislature in 1999. Frank was active in the riding and represented his party well.

Manufacturing is a primary employer in London-Fanshawe, and some of the major industries include Accuride, 3M and General Motors. Small businesses are an essential part of the economy right across Ontario, and London-Fanshawe is no exception. The retail sector is also important and the White Oaks shopping area draws shoppers from across the city and region.

While we are on the subject of employers and employment, I would like to mention that income levels in my riding are not as high as the provincial average. This income gap is something that needs to be addressed, and I will work to correct this problem during my time in office. An important first step is the recent government decision to raise the minimum wage. This increase is long overdue and is the first rise in the minimum wage since 1995. We all know that since that time, there has been about a 15% increase in the cost of living. It is time to help those on minimum wage to work in daily life. I would like to commend the government for quick action on this issue. I know that it's only a first step in raising incomes for the poorest members of our society.

London-Fanshawe is home to many outstanding educational facilities, including John Paul II High School, the Robarts Provincial School for the Deaf, Nicholas Wilson Public School and Fanshawe College. I would like to remind members of the House that Fanshawe College is one of Canada's fastest-growing colleges and boasts one of the highest employment rates for new graduates in the entire country.

I am also pleased to represent many constituents who attend the University of Western Ontario, which is located in the neighbouring riding of London North-Centre.

In London-Fanshawe our most valuable assets are our people. Working and living in this community is both a

blessing and an education. Many people are surprised to find out that London is actually a diverse city. My riding is enriched by many groups including those of Arab, Portuguese, Italian, Irish and Polish heritage. I have learned a great deal from those and other communities in my riding.

I decided to move to London-Fanshawe when I came to Canada from Lebanon 15 years ago. I would like to thank my constituents for electing me to this House, where I will work and speak for their needs and their interests.

With my remaining time, I would like to speak about the throne speech and about the government's agenda for this coming session. The throne speech laid out a responsible plan of action for this province. The throne speech made one thing abundantly clear: We cannot mortgage the future of this province by spending more than we have and running up large debts. The consensus is clear: The people of Ontario want to leave our children a financially sound future; we do not want to leave a legacy mired in debt. I am proud to be a part of a government that is committed to this goal, and I am fully supportive of all initiatives that ensure that Ontario is built on a solid financial foundation.

Every dollar of deficit that Ontario chalks up becomes a debt, and every dollar of debt costs the taxpayer more money to service that debt. We want to have enough money to pay down the debt so taxpayers' money goes toward essential services and not to paying off Ontario's creditors. Let's make our spending count by eliminating the need to use a portion of each dollar to pay creditors. Let us set an aggressive goal that will see us use every penny of every dollar to pay for services that improve the quality of people's lives in very concrete ways. Let us use every penny of every dollar to pay for quality education, for accessible and timely health care and to support those members of society who, through no fault of their own, need our extra support. These are things that matter. This is where we need to focus our spending.

A couple weeks ago I met with a very special constituent named Marissa Lauffman. Marissa was born deaf and began to lose her vision in her 20s when she was attending university. Now Marissa is completely blind and depends on interpreters or interveners who use tactile sign language, touching Marissa's hand with a special language that is her only means of interacting with others. When Marissa lost her vision, her life changed.

In a letter, she explained how the loss of her sight has robbed her of very simple things that I am sure everyone in this House takes completely for granted. This is what Marissa wrote: "I can no longer watch TV or read the newspaper. I can no longer go out by myself for exercise. I can no longer see the signs that my friends are using to communicate with me and the people around me."

Marissa has two boys. One is four years old and has started junior kindergarten this year, and the other little boy is two. Both of Marissa's children can see and hear, but their ability to communicate with their mother is limited.

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Marissa gets just six hours of time with an intervener from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind each week so that she can do things like communicate with her children, do her banking, shop for groceries, go to church or come to my office to convey her message. Marissa has written a proposal requesting 30 hours every week. I will use her own words to tell you how much it means to Marissa to have an interpreter to connect her to the life around. She says:

“Intervention allows me to communicate with people, which is an essential part of being human. Intervention has allowed me to feel connected to the people in my life, including my own children. From the moment my sons were born, interveners were there to tell me what my son looked like. Was he crying? What were the nurses doing with him? Was he healthy? Was my husband crying or smiling?”

“I still feel I am independent. I wish I did not need the assistance of an intervener. I wish I could live independently like before. But my life has changed. In order to live without isolation, I need intervention services. I’m currently a client at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. I receive six hours of intervention a week. Six hours is not enough to live independently. I have felt depression and loneliness for many years.

“My drive and ambition have faded a little each year. I have accepted the services provided for me and not fought for more. But over the last few years, after becoming a mother, I have realized I need to be the best that I can be for my children. I need to think of their needs as well. I can’t expect them to be isolated inside our home with me. They need to be outside playing, socializing, and learning, just like other kids.”

Marissa is not asking for anything unreasonable.

It is with human priorities like Marissa’s in mind that I fully support the responsible initiatives that this government has made to reduce the deficit. Let us leave a financially solvent province to our children and work to make every penny provided by hard-working taxpayers count for tangible results. Let’s make sure that we give people like Marissa the support that they need—now and in the future.

You have already heard me say in this House that a society or its government can only be judged by how it treats its most vulnerable members. I am proud to be a member of a government that ran on a platform that weighs the human costs in its decisions. I am proud to be a member of a government that considers the human factor and not the corporate ledger as paramount in its decision-making.

For eight years, the poor in this province have waited for a hike in the minimum wage. Now they will have it. For years, the disabled have been treated economically like second-class citizens in this province. No more. In London and Middlesex alone, there are over 4,000 people on waiting lists for subsidized housing. I am proud to be a member of a government that, along with our federal counterpart, is committed to building 20,000 units of

subsidized housing over the next four years. I believe the role of government is not just to be a regulating institution but to take responsibility and provide relief to those in our society who most need assistance.

People living with disabilities have been neglected by the provincial government for too long. We have a collective duty as human beings to provide for those who have little or no resource to provide for themselves. How can we neglect those who, through no fault of their own, cannot provide for themselves? We have a responsibility as a collective society. Let us live up to it.

The throne speech also made reference to many issues that I personally feel connected to. If I could define what issues I see as my priority as a member of this House, I would be correcting the problems in getting skilled immigrants accredited in this province, rebuilding and restoring faith in our education system, ensuring the best assistance possible to the disabled who have been sorely neglected, ensuring that our health care system remains public and help solve the shortage of family doctors in our province of Ontario.

The problems with degree accreditation and recognition of skilled labour go back many governments. Every party in this House has put forth legislation of some kind in an attempt to alleviate this issue. Furthermore, every party made campaign promises to deal with this issue. This gives me hope, since we all agree that accreditation must be dealt with. We must come together and solve this issue for both economic and human reasons.

The education system issue will be debated and discussed numerous times over the course of the parliamentary session. I firmly believe that education is an investment that is worth making, because every dollar effectively spent on education benefits the people and the economy of Ontario for years to come. We know two things about an educated population. First, we know that educated people can better compete in an international marketplace, and in order for Ontario’s economy to thrive, it’s workforce must be competitive. Secondly, an educated population is a healthier population. Education improves quality of life, and that is why we are here in this House. It is our solemn duty to improve the lives of people in this province. We will fulfill that duty in large measure by ensuring the provision of quality education for all citizens. In my riding of London-Fanshawe, there are far too many people without high school diplomas. Our government is committed to make changes to improve the quality and delivery of education in our province, and this is a welcome initiative.

Providing quality public health care is also on this government’s agenda. We need to recruit and develop, as well as accredit, more doctors in this province to deal with a severe shortage of family physicians. London-Fanshawe desperately needs more family doctors. Several constituents have already contacted my office for help in finding a health care provider. Correcting the shortages will take some time and much effort. I’m proud to serve as a member of this government, a government

that is committed to addressing this problem and protecting the public nature of our health care system. Access to care is the right of every Ontarian. We cannot entrust health care to corporate interests where quality medicine comes second to the bottom line.

Health care, education and addressing human needs through a strong economy and social programs: I am proud to know that these are the priorities of the constituents in my riding, for the people of this entire province and for this government. Furthermore, I am proud that these priorities will be carried out with a strong sense of fiscal responsibility. I will work hard for the people of London-Fanshawe to ensure that these issues are addressed and to make sure that we see some tangible and positive results in our riding.

Like a family, we are all in this together. Those of us who come from big families know it can be trying, but there are few payoffs in life quite like it. It changes how you see things. Dalton McGuinty understands that. He is the eldest in the family of 10. I have confidence in his leadership, because I know he will remember those issues that are intrinsic to the well-being of families. I trust that he and all of us here will work toward creating a more responsible, gentle and compassionate government whose goal is to better the lives the people of this province.

I entered the realm of politics because I wanted to fight for those less fortunate than I. I have been lucky in my life, finding success in business after I moved to Canada. I have been healthy through my life. I chose to seek office because I believe it's the responsibility of every man and woman in this province to do what they can to help those around them. I ran for the Liberal Party because I believe our platform is the best means to that end.

I have been honoured and rewarded by the voters of London-Fanshawe. I didn't win because I am the smoothest speaker. I did not win because I came into the race with a massive war chest. I did not win because of my political experience. I won because the people of London-Fanshawe, indeed the people of Ontario, said it was time for a change. This change means doing the best for the greatest number. This change means listening and responding to the needs of those who have often gone unheard. This change is tempered with responsibility, but with compassion enough to care.

I pledge that I will work to my utmost to uphold this trust. I have not and I will not ever take it lightly.

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The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Seeing none, I will ask for further debate.

Mrs Liz Sandals (Guelph-Wellington): Although I have already spoken on several occasions in this Legislature, this is my first official speech—my official maiden speech, in fact.

I would like to begin by thanking my constituents in Guelph-Wellington for selecting me as their member of provincial Parliament. I am honoured to have the opportunity to represent them. It has been both humbling and

daunting to take my place in the Legislature, not in one of the galleries for guests but in my seat on the floor of the Legislature at a well-aged desk that has been the workplace of many generations of legislators before me.

It has been awe-inspiring to glance up at the lovingly restored carvings and artwork that surround us, and it has been downright confusing at times trying to figure out what on earth is going on and why the bells are ringing yet again. However, we rookies are beginning to figure out the rules, and we have at least mastered the protocol on how to vote.

I would also like to thank all the volunteers who worked so very hard on my campaign. They were loyal, tireless, dedicated and very well organized. The work of the Liberal volunteers of Guelph-Wellington put me here, and I thank each and every one of them.

We started going door to door almost exactly a year before the eventual election date. We talked to a lot of people, particularly in the older part of Guelph. Voter after voter wanted to talk about Harry Worton and what a fine gentleman he was. Harry Worton served the people of Guelph and Wellington South as MPP for an astounding 30 years, from 1955 to 1985. When I was in elementary school, I learned that Harry Worton was the MPP. When my kids went to elementary school, they learned that Harry Worton was the MPP. In fact, I suspect that if Harry were still alive and still running, Harry would still be the MPP. Political party really had nothing to do with it. The people of Guelph elected as MP Alf Hales, who was a Conservative and a butcher, and for MPP they voted for Harry Worton, who was a Liberal and a baker. There is no record of the people of Guelph-Wellington ever voting for a candlestick maker to finish off the rhyme. However, even Harry admitted that when he was first elected as alderman in Guelph in 1944, at the age of 23, he was elected because he promised to put more raisins in his buns.

Harry served his entire 30 years as MPP in opposition. While the official record shows that he served as party whip and as critic for various ministries, Harry was primarily a constituency man. He believed his first job was to quietly help his constituents. As I knocked on doors, many voters were still recounting stories of how Harry had helped them.

Interestingly, Harry never had a constituency office. He worked out of an office in his basement, and his wife, Olive, answered the phone. The newspaper reports tell us that this was because he was being very frugal with taxpayers' money, and I'm sure that was partly true; however, I really think that Harry just thought that welcoming people into his home was much friendlier.

At his retirement dinner in 1985, former Ontario Premier Frank Miller told Harry, "At the end of 30 years, no one ever robbed you of your good name." Harry Worton was respected by all, constituents and colleagues, as an honourable man. For a rookie MPP like me, he left a towering reputation to live up to.

Harry was succeeded by Liberal Rick Ferraro, from 1985 to 1990. Rick served as Ontario's first small busi-

ness advocate and as parliamentary assistant in a variety of ministries. I find it particularly interesting that Rick was PA to the Honourable Mr Kwinter, who was then Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology. Coincidentally, I have also had the pleasure of being appointed as parliamentary assistant to Mr Kwinter, albeit now in the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

By another coincidence, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, where I have my office, is located in the Drew Building. George Drew was born in Guelph. Following a military career, Mr Drew returned to Guelph to become its mayor. Drew went on to be elected the Conservative Premier of Ontario from 1943 to 1948.

By reputation, position and location, I am surrounded by reminders of exemplary public service in Guelph-Wellington.

My riding, Guelph-Wellington, is centred in the historic city of Guelph, with one of the most attractive main streets in Ontario. Some early town council decreed the street would be four lanes wide plus parking, with all buildings faced with limestone. One suspects this was really some sort of early fire control measure, but the result a century and a half later is a very impressive public space.

Guelph is known internationally for its university. Guelph has long been the home of the Ontario Agricultural College; the Ontario Veterinary College, where my husband is on faculty; and the Macdonald Institute. It received its charter as an independent composite university in the early 1960s. I am proud that my father, Earl MacNaughton, is one of the academic leaders who built today's highly rated University of Guelph from the base of the three founding colleges.

Given its scientific expertise, Guelph is home to a growing cluster of agribusiness and biotechnology industries. Less well known is Guelph's role as a leading manufacturing community. In fact, our largest employment sector is auto parts manufacturing.

Guelph was founded by Scots in the early 1800s, welcomed a large number of Italian immigrants in the 1900s—our Minister of Finance's family, the Sorbara family, was among those immigrants to Guelph in the early 1900s—and today I represent citizens with over 200 ethnic origins. Our most recent immigrants represent over 40 ethnic origins, with the largest numbers arriving from East Asia and South Asia.

The Wellington part of my riding is composed of two municipalities, the township of Guelph-Eramosa and the township of Puslinch.

Guelph-Eramosa retains a largely rural character and includes the village of Rockwood. Last weekend, Rockwood hosted the very popular Farmer's Parade of Lights, a community Christmas parade with a twist. The floats are really farm implements decked out in Christmas lights. Speaker, I would have brought the pictures to demonstrate, but the Sergeant-at-Arms would have confiscated them.

Puslinch contains some of the most unusual geology in Ontario: drumlins poking out of wetlands and North America's largest kettle lake. On the surface, this produces beautiful scenery interspersed with gravel pits. Below the surface, this produces an extensive water generation system which supplies local industries like Aberfoyle Springs and Sleeman Breweries. Keeping this unique ecosystem in balance is one of the challenges for both local and provincial governments.

Why do I want to be here representing the wonderful people of Guelph-Wellington? I think our Premier, Dalton McGuinty, has captured it when he talks about the value of government. There are certain things for which the public believes the government is responsible and which they expect the government should do properly. The public has a right to expect quality health care in hospitals and in the community. Every child has the right to be educated to the best of their ability, regardless of race, religion or socio-economic background. People are entitled to clean air and safe water. It is reasonable to expect that when you flip the switch, the lights will come on. Quite frankly, the previous government was not delivering the services the public expects.

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As I went door to door over the past year, I heard countless stories of the failure of government. Let me tell you just one. I knocked on a door and young woman came, a few kids behind her. She told me she was separated, but in fairness to her ex-husband, he had been regularly paying support payments. She was attending nursing school—she had one semester left—because she wanted to become independent and be able to support herself in the future. Her husband had been laid off; he could no longer support her. So she had gone to Ontario Works and asked if they could help. They said, yes, she would qualify for Ontario Works, but in order to get support she had to quit her nursing program. She had one more semester to go, but she had to quit her nursing program. Ontario is short of nurses, but if the Tories were going to help her, she had to drop out. The people of Ontario deserve better government and, unlike the Tories, we are here to be the government.

As many of you know, my background is education. I served as a public school trustee for 15 years. However, what people generally don't know is that my academic training is in math and computer science.

Hon Greg Sorbara (Minister of Finance): I knew that.

Mrs Sandals: Did you know that? Very good.

I'm one of those odd people who actually look at numbers in the appendices of reports instead of stopping at the executive summary. Donna knows; she's been in meetings with me.

One of the reports which has fascinating background data is the 2001 report of the OECD, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, on international test results for 15-year-olds in reading, math and science. The popular press reported that Canadian students in general, and Ontario students as well, placed

quite favourably in the international rankings. This was interesting news in itself since the students tested were the leading edge of the double cohort, the last group studying the old curriculum. The report told us about our kids before the Tories fixed the curriculum and introduced private school funding. But the press didn't report on the background data, so I'd like to share it.

The OECD collected data on the socio-economic status of the students who wrote their tests. In all countries, not surprisingly, the socio-economic status of the family impacts student achievement. Rich kids do better than poor kids. However, Canada, along with Finland and Japan, has a shallow gradient. This means that the socio-economic status has less impact on the scores for Canadian students than in other countries. The numbers tell us that public education is working. Poor students in Canada have an opportunity to achieve academic success and improve their status. Egerton Ryerson, Ontario's founding father of public education, would be thrilled. His vision of bringing education to the masses to develop better citizens and build a better province lives on.

In contrast, the OECD report goes on to say, the impact of socio-economic status in the United States is about double that of Canada. There is much greater reliance on private education in the United States, with charter and voucher systems encouraging rich parents to abandon the public school system. Clearly, the US model is much less successful at closing the socio-economic gap than Canada's predominantly public education model.

What about comparing the performance of public schools and private schools to give parents choice, as the Conservatives would have it? In every country, private school students have higher raw scores than public school students. However, when one takes into account the impact of socio-economic status, there are two jurisdictions in the entire world where public school students outperform private school students: one is Alberta and the other is Ontario. When you remove the rich-kid

effect, Ontario's public school students scored better than our private school students. There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that Ontario should rush to fund private schools. Public perceptions that private school kids do better than public school kids are simply not based on good data. So I'm delighted that the throne speech announced that our Liberal government will be ending private school funding. When we get to voting on third reading of the tax bill later this week, I will consider it sort of a personal Christmas present if it passes.

In conclusion, the throne speech outlines a vision for the revival of government in Ontario. Yes, we face challenges, but we also have a great opportunity to build the Ontario that people want. I'm excited to be a member of this Legislature. I'm excited to be part of the team that will face the challenges. I'm excited to have the opportunity to help create a better province for the citizens of Ontario.

With that, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

Those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Carried.

Orders of the day?

Hon Mr Peters: I seek unanimous consent that, for the purposes of standing order 41, tonight's debate be considered one full sessional day.

The Acting Speaker: Is there unanimous agreement? Carried.

Hon Mr Peters: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: All in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

Those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30.

The House adjourned at 2107.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Alvin Curling
Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers
Deputy Clerk / Sous-greffière: Deborah Deller
Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman
Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Halton	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Ancaster-Dundas-	McMeekin, Ted (L)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Flamborough-Aldershot		Hamilton Mountain	Bountrogianni, Hon / L'hon Marie (L) Minister of Children's Services, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Services à l'enfance, ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Barrie-Simcoe-Bradford	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC) First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative		
Beaches-East York / Beaches-York-Est	Prue, Michael (ND)	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Marsales, Judy (L)
Bramalea-Gore-Malton- Springdale	Kular, Kuldip (L)	Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington	Dombrowsky, Hon / L'hon Leona (L) Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Brampton Centre / -Centre	Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Huron-Bruce	Mitchell, Carol (L)
Brampton West-Mississauga / Brampton-Ouest-Mississauga	Dhillon, Vic (L)	Kenora-Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND)
Brant	Levac, Dave (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Gerretsen, Hon / L'hon John (L) Minister of Municipal Affairs, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Affaires municipales, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)		
Burlington	Jackson, Cameron (PC)	Kitchener Centre / -Centre	Milloy, John (L)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Kitchener-Waterloo	Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)
Chatham-Kent Essex	Hoy, Pat (L)	Lambton-Kent-Middlesex	Van Bommel, Maria (L)
Davenport	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Lanark-Carleton	Sterling, Norman W. (PC)
Don Valley East / -Est	Caplan, Hon / L'hon David (L) Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy House Leader / ministre du Renouveau de l'infrastructure publique, leader parlementaire adjoint	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Robert W. (PC)
Don Valley West / -Ouest	Wynne, Kathleen O. (L)	London North Centre / London Centre-Nord	Matthews, Deborah (L)
Dufferin-Peel-Wellington- Grey	Eves, Ernie (PC) Leader of the opposition / chef de l'opposition	London West / -Ouest	Bentley, Hon / L'hon Christopher (L) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
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Eglinton-Lawrence	Colle, Mike (L)	Markham	Wong, Tony C. (L)
Elgin-Middlesex-London	Peters, Hon / L'hon Steve (L) Minister of Agriculture and Food / ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation	Mississauga Centre / -Centre	Takhar, Hon / L'hon Harinder S. (L) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Erie-Lincoln	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Mississauga East / -Est	Fonseca, Peter (L)
Essex	Crozier, Bruce (L) Deputy Speaker, Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative	Mississauga South / -Sud	Peterson, Tim (L)
		Mississauga West / -Ouest	Delaney, Bob (L)
		Nepean-Carleton	Baird, John R. (PC)
		Niagara Centre / -Centre	Kormos, Peter (ND)
		Niagara Falls	Craitor, Kim (L)
		Nickel Belt	Martel, Shelley (ND)
		Nipissing	Smith, Monique (L)
		Northumberland	Rinaldi, Lou (L)
		Oak Ridges	Klees, Frank (PC)
		Oakville	Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)
		Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)
		Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
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Ottawa West-Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest-Nepean	Watson, Hon / L'hon Jim (L) Minister of Consumer and Business Services / ministre des Services aux consommateurs et aux entreprises	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Hon / L'hon Rick (L) Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ottawa-Orléans	McNeely, Phil (L)	Thornhill	Racco, Mario G. (L)
Ottawa-Vanier	Meilleur, Hon / L'hon Madeleine (L) Minister of Culture, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones	Thunder Bay-Atikokan	Mauro, Bill (L)
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Thunder Bay-Superior North / -Nord	Gravelle, Michael (L)
Parkdale-High Park	Kennedy, Hon / L'hon Gerard (L) Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation	Timiskaming-Cochrane	Ramsay, Hon / L'hon David (L) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Parry Sound-Muskoka	Miller, Norm (PC)	Timmins-James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	Bisson, Gilles (ND)
Perth-Middlesex	Wilkinson, John (L)	Toronto Centre-Rosedale / Toronto-Centre-Rosedale	Smitherman, Hon / L'hon George (L) Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Peterborough	Leal, Jeff (L)	Toronto-Danforth	Churley, Marilyn (ND)
Pickering-Ajax-Uxbridge	Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Trinity-Spadina	Marchese, Rosario (ND)
Prince Edward-Hastings	Parsons, Ernie (L)	Vaughan-King-Aurora	Sorbara, Hon / L'hon Greg (L) Minister of Finance / ministre des Finances
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Sarnia-Lambton	Di Cocco, Caroline (L)	Whitby-Ajax	Flaherty, Jim (PC)
Sault Ste Marie	Oraziotti, David (L)	Willowdale	Zimmer, David (L)
Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Duguid, Brad (L)	Windsor West / -Ouest	Pupatello, Hon / L'hon Sandra (L) Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Scarborough East / -Est	Chambers, Hon / L'hon Mary Anne V. (L) Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités	Windsor-St Clair	Duncan, Hon / L'hon Dwight (L) Minister of Energy, Chair of Cabinet, Government House Leader / ministre de l'Énergie, président du Conseil des ministres, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Scarborough Southwest / -Sud-Ouest	Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	York Centre / -Centre	Kwinter, Hon / L'hon Monte (L) Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Hon / L'hon Gerry (L) Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement	York North / -Nord	Munro, Julia (PC)
Scarborough-Rouge River	Curling, Hon / L'hon Alvin (L) Speaker / Président	York South-Weston / York-Sud-Weston	Cordiano, Hon / L'hon Joseph (L) Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Simcoe North / -Nord	Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	York West / -Ouest	Sergio, Mario (L)
Simcoe-Grey	Wilson, Jim (PC)		
St Catharines	Bradley, Hon / L'hon James J. (L) Minister of Tourism and Recreation / ministre du Tourisme et des Loisirs		
St Paul's	Bryant, Hon / L'hon Michael (L) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs, minister responsible for democratic renewal / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones, ministre responsable du Renouveau démocratique		
Stoney Creek	Mossop, Jennifer F. (L)		

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

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