



## FOCUS ON QUEEN'S PARK



### House Resumes Sitting

MPPs returned to Queen's Park on March 23 for the presentation of the spring budget. The House will now sit until the third week in June, with the exception of one week in May.

### Budget Missed Opportunities for People

NDP Leader Howard Hampton said Dalton McGuinty's third budget is another missed opportunity to make life better for working families.

"Dalton's leaky budget is a missed opportunity for working families. It's a cynical, political document, full of holes, full of broken promises, that fails to address real problems for real people who need real help right now," Hampton said. He listed the following as the budget's key failings:

**Health Care:** The McGuinty government will build 11 private hospitals, bleeding hundreds of millions of dollars from patients to profits for shareholders.

**Education:** The McGuinty government abandoned the tuition freeze, making college and university less affordable for students.

**Energy:** There is no action plan to deal with the high cost of energy.

**Cities:** Apart from cynical one-off funding for some municipalities, there is no commitment to ongoing, sustained uploading of downloaded provincially-mandated services that are driving up property taxes, and gutting infrastructure and services.

**Jobs:** There is no action plan to stop the haemorrhaging of Ontario manufacturing and forestry jobs – that despite all parties passing a resolution calling for one. There is also no sign of multi-year funding for farm assistance to help farmers.

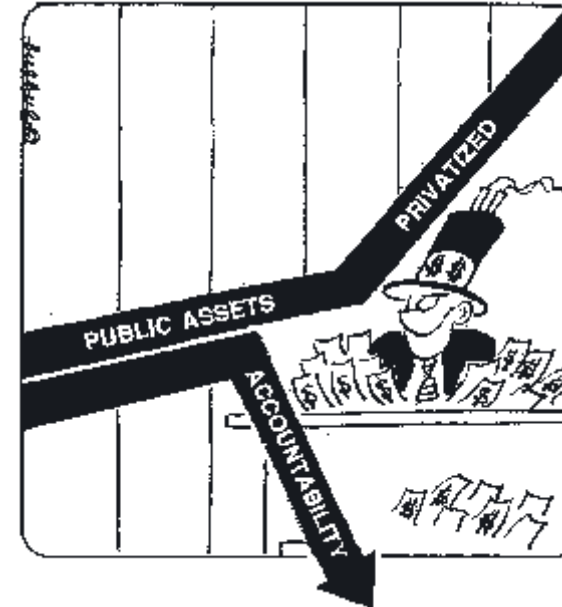
**New Canadians:** There is no plan to expand accreditation for internationally-trained professionals or expand English as a Second Language programs.

**Help for the vulnerable:** McGuinty has slashed childcare by 22%, broken his promise to stop the clawback of the National Child Benefit Supplement and provided only token increases to people on Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support program.

**Capital tax giveaway:** McGuinty is speeding up the elimination of the Capital Tax, most of which goes to

banks and insurance companies. Fully implemented, that will cost \$1.2 billion.

"Dalton McGuinty has missed opportunities to improve health and education, save jobs, and assist the vulnerable, to give away money to private hospitals and banks. This budget is another Liberal letdown, another broken promise," Hampton said.



### Budget Lets Down Children

NDP Leader Howard Hampton called on Dalton McGuinty to change his budget to make children a top priority. "Dalton McGuinty's budget lets down children,

Ontario's most vulnerable citizens. Mr. McGuinty has a \$3 billion budget windfall. He has the money to keep his promises. Instead, he broke his promises – to stop the clawback of the National Child Benefit Supplement and to invest in childcare for working families," Hampton said.

During the election, McGuinty said it was wrong to take money away from Ontario's poorest children. But he is still taking that money from Ontario's poorest children, about \$1,500 per child per year.

McGuinty also promised to invest \$300 million in new provincial dollars in childcare. Not only has the Premier failed to invest a single penny of Ontario money, he has made a bad situation worse by slashing Ontario's childcare budget by \$186 million, to \$688 million this year from \$874 million the year before. That's a 22% cut.

"Dalton McGuinty owes an explanation to families waiting for childcare. Why is he slashing childcare? Why won't he keep his promise to invest new provincial dollars to create new spaces?" Hampton said.

### NDP Calls for Action on Violence

NDP MPP for Hamilton East, Andrea Horwath says it's time for the McGuinty

Liberals to put funding into violence prevention. "On April 2 Francine Mailly of Ottawa and her three children were murdered by her estranged husband. Francine first complained to the Ottawa police in 2002, and as recently as February police were aware of the danger that Francine's husband posed," said Horwath.

"Following the Hadley inquest, whose recommendations the McGuinty government has not yet implemented, the former government set up the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee. In 2004, the committee reported on the need for better training of front-line workers, specifically for police and child welfare workers. Two years later, funding is still inadequate and a fraction of what was promised."

"There is no shortage of reports, recommendations and ideas that need to be implemented, but the reality is that this government is simply not flowing the funding," said Horwath. "They promised \$68 million; they've only flowed \$26 million."

How many more women and children are going to suffer at the hands of their abusers before this government starts taking some of these recommendations more seriously and implements them?"

## KORMOS' KORNER

*Today, here in the Legislature, we have the former chief commissioner of the BC Human Rights Commission, Mary-Woo Simms. She's here in Toronto today because she, like so many others, is so greatly concerned about the proposed changes to the Ontario Human Rights Commission. You see, similar changes took place in BC, and the results have been disastrous, incredibly negative consequences for people who had real need for human rights protection. We're asking the Attorney General to retreat from these proposals and work with the groups that rely upon the Commission to produce reforms that work for everyone, and not just a few.*

*Since the government's announcement six weeks ago, group after group, individual after individual who works out there on the front lines, on the street, on the ground with victims of discrimination and racism, has been condemning this proposal. We're asking the Attorney General to back off, sit down with these folks, consult in a way that he hasn't consulted, and develop reforms that are going to work for everyone, not just his lawyer friends.*

- Peter Kormos



NDP Labour Critic  
Peter Kormos



## Hospital Funding

Michael Prue, NDP MPP for Beaches-East York, questioned the Premier on private hospitals. "Many Ontarians are very angry that your budget does nothing to stop the creeping privatization of Ontario's hospital system," said Prue.

"They know that your private hospital scheme will result in construction costs that may be 30% or 40% higher than they would be if it was done in the public way. That's because private sector borrowing costs are typically much higher. I have a very simple question: Do you have any study that examines the costs of private hospitals to the public treasury, and if you do, will you release it to this Legislature?"

"We on this side of the House have a study by an independent economist that verifies that the Brampton private hospital alone would cost \$175 million more than if it was built as a public hospital," said Prue. "That translates into billions of dollars if you multiply that by the 20 or so hospitals you plan to build."

"The tragedy is that these new hospitals, schools and transit facilities all over the province won't get built because the money that would be going to vital community projects is ending up going to Bay Street private-sector deal makers."

## By-Election Results

Dalton McGuinty's Liberals lost all three by-elections on March 30. In Toronto Danforth, the NDPs Peter Tabuns won with 47% of the vote. In Whitby-Ajax, Tory Christine Elliott won with 46% and Lisa MacLeod won Nepean-Carleton for the Tories with 57% of the vote.

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