



Speech from the Throne

A New Era for Ontario

**Address of
The Honourable James K. Bartleman
Lieutenant Governor of Ontario**

**on the opening of the Third Session of the
Thirty-Seventh Parliament of the Province of Ontario**

May 9, 2002



INTRODUCTION

Mr. Speaker, members of the legislative assembly, citizens of Ontario:

Across Ontario, people have begun tending their gardens and greeting their neighbours over fences. Soccer and baseball fields and neighbourhood streets are filled with the sounds of children playing. Communities all across Ontario are celebrating the start of spring.

It is an honour to stand before you in a new season before a new government as Her Majesty's new representative to open this, the Third Session of the 37th parliament, and deliver the speech from the throne.

On behalf of our Sovereign, I welcome all members to this house today and recognize two former members who have recently retired from public life.

Michael Harris served as the member for Nipissing for more than two decades and as the Premier of Ontario for almost seven years. His bold and historic reforms put our province back on track, and his strong leadership forever changed Canadian politics. Former Premier Harris continues to show his commitment to the people of Ontario by chairing Ontario's Promise.

For 12 years David Tilson served the people of Dufferin-Peel-Wellington-Grey with dedication and hard work on both sides of this house. We thank him for his years of faithful service to his constituents, to the people of Ontario and to the traditions of the Legislature.

On behalf of their constituents, all members in this place share the common goal of creating a better Ontario. In acknowledgement of this important contribution, your government wants the role of private members in the Legislature enhanced.

REFLECTION AND REMEMBRANCE

Since this house last met, we have been saddened by the loss of five former members:

- Kenneth Bryden, MPP for Woodbine. Kenneth was a deep thinker, a concerned member of his community and an example of active citizenship.



- Edward R. Good, MPP for Waterloo North. Edward served as a second lieutenant with the Royal Canadian Artillery during World War II. The people of Kitchener remember him as a gentleman and a tireless worker.
- Lorne Henderson, MPP for Lambton and Minister of Agriculture. Lorne was a farmer, and other farmers knew they could always count on him to champion their needs.
- Ross MacKenzie Whicher, member for Bruce in both the provincial and federal legislatures and a former mayor of Wiarton. Ross believed in the importance of community, as he showed in his life and work.
- Harry Worton, MPP for Wellington South, was a statesman who served as a member for 30 years and was loved and respected by his colleagues on both sides of this house.

Among them, these members served the people of Ontario and their ridings for 82 years and shared a deep love of our great province.

We remember others who have meant much to Ontario and its citizens.

We remember The Queen Mother. Born at the beginning of the last century, her courage during the darkest days of World War II and lifelong compassion for others were the true source of her nobility.

In February, Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon passed away after a lengthy illness. The Princess had visited here on several occasions, often visiting patients at the hospital named for her.

We also think of Her Honour Pauline McGibbon, who served this province as Lieutenant Governor from 1974 to 1980. She touched the lives of people all across Ontario with her wisdom and warmth. The first female Lieutenant Governor in the Commonwealth, she was a role model for many.

There are other role models who risk their lives every day to protect our communities and our country.

This past weekend, Ontario honoured Toronto Police Services Constable Laura Ellis, who died while responding to an emergency call, and Constable Millard Brennan, who lost his life in the line of duty in 1951. On Tuesday, we learned of another loss. First Nations Constable Paul Neudert from the Walpole Island Police



Service died in a tragic car accident near Wallaceburg while on duty. Our thoughts are with his friends and family.

We must never forget the sacrifices our police officers make and we express our gratitude to all of the women and men in uniform across Ontario, ever mindful of the words on Ontario's Police Memorial — "Heroes in life, not death."

We must not forget firefighters who have lost their lives ensuring people's safety. This year, your government will work with the fire services community to create a firefighters' memorial on the grounds of Queen's Park.

Our hearts go out to the families of Sergeant Marc Léger, Corporal Ainsworth Dyer, Private Richard Green and Private Nathan Smith, the four members of Canada's Armed Forces killed in Afghanistan. Together with the more than 112,000 Canadian soldiers killed in combat and the 108 who have died in peacekeeping missions, they remind us that we must often pay a great price to keep the peace and protect our freedoms.

On September 11th, that peace and those freedoms were threatened. Across Canada, our citizens took stranded travellers into their homes. Volunteers drove hundreds of kilometres to New York and Washington to lend a hand. In reaching out to help our neighbours to the south, Ontarians demonstrated the values that have made our province great.

We pay tribute to the Ontario victims of that tragedy, including David Barkway, whose wife, Cindy, recently gave birth to their son, David. While we share the sense of loss with Cindy and the families of the victims, we also share the joy that comes with new life and a renewed sense of hope for the future.

A NEW ERA FOR ONTARIO

Just as spring marks a time of renewal and transition, so too does this speech from the throne symbolize a new era for Ontario.

Ontario today is a different place than it was a few short years, indeed even a few short months ago. The actions your government took over the past seven years were right for the times. Unemployment was high. Spending was out of control. High taxes were killing growth and jobs. Those were the challenges we have met thanks to years of hard work.



Once again, Ontario is strong, confident and moving forward. Full of pride. Full of hope.

But the job is never done.

New challenges have tested who we are as a province and as a people.

From this we have learned a great deal.

We have learned that we are not isolated from the events that shape our world. That even the strongest of foundations can be shaken.

But we have also learned that, through closer co-operation among governments, communities, cultures and neighbours, we can accomplish much.

The challenge now is to guide our province smoothly through a new era. We must protect the best of what we have while changing what is necessary to improve the lives of Ontarians.

Government is not the only answer to this challenge.

Responsible government knows its place. It understands where it does not belong and it is prepared to get out of the way.

But responsive government also recognizes where it has a role to play to provide leadership and take action in the best interests of all Ontarians. And it has the courage to play that role.

Your new government promises to deliver both responsible and responsive leadership.

Leadership that encourages Ontario's competitiveness and protects the gains we have made over the past seven years through tax cuts and sound fiscal management. It is a job that is never done.

Leadership with the strength to listen and the courage to act, blending common sense solutions with a common sense of purpose.

In providing Ontarians with that leadership, your government's priorities are clear: to uphold the fundamentals that have enabled us to rebuild our great province but at the same time make the changes necessary to respond to a new Ontario.



Ontarians have said they do not want classrooms and hospitals to be battlegrounds. Your government has heard that message.

Ontario's goals can only be achieved by working in partnership with educators and health care providers. Although, from time to time, there may be disagreements on the best way to get there, your government will not waver in its belief that Ontarians share its priorities and it will do what it takes to achieve these important objectives.

The last few years required difficult choices. But those are not the same choices we face today. New challenges require new solutions.

In response to the need for more stability in education and health care, your government will introduce three-year base funding for school boards and hospitals. Over the next year, your government will work to develop a model for multi-year base funding that ensures improved accountability, accessibility and fairness.

As well, it will change its budget cycle, delivering budgets before the start of the fiscal year. This will help ministries, public institutions and the government plan and budget in a way that better meets the needs of Ontario's citizens.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION

Ontario's young people — no matter who they are or where they live — deserve the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the gains we have made as a province.

Establishing the foundation for excellence in education in all parts of Ontario was the first step in that direction. Ontario's education reforms have begun to achieve accountability and quality in our schools and classrooms. A more rigorous, standardized curriculum means students in every corner of our province are getting the same excellent education. New report cards are helping parents monitor their children's progress.

Standardized tests for students are helping to ensure that what is taught is learned and what is learned is relevant. Qualification requirements for teachers are helping to ensure that teachers are well equipped to plan appropriate programs for students.

At the end of the day, students, teachers, parents and government share the common goal of ensuring that all Ontario students have an equal opportunity for a quality education.



But Ontario cannot put students first without listening to their parents and teachers. Your government is doing that.

To excel, young people must have the tools to master the new curriculum, year after year. Your government heard from students, parents and teachers that students across our province needed more textbooks.

The first priority of your new government has been to address this need. Three weeks ago, your Premier and the Minister of Education announced an additional \$65 million in funding for textbooks and learning resources for our students. Your government will continue to monitor needs for future years.

The introduction of student-focused funding in 1997 was designed to ensure that resources were invested where they matter most. Your government remains committed to that goal, but Ontarians have expressed concerns that the current formula is not achieving that. Students in communities from Cochrane to Cornwall, from Point Pelee to Pickle Lake, have different needs. Your government is acting immediately to address this and give Ontario students the resources they need.

Your government is today announcing that respected educator, Dr. Mordechai Rozanski, president of the University of Guelph, has agreed to lead a task force to review the current funding formula. That process will begin tomorrow.

The Education Equality Task Force will report back by November 1, 2002, with recommendations on ways to improve fairness, certainty and stability for our schools and our students.

Last year, your government introduced a flexible funding amount of \$100 per student, which school boards can use to address local priorities. This year, your government will build on this commitment with additional funding and stability.

Your government will also introduce a Quality in the Classroom Fund to ensure that schools can move forward with creative solutions to enhance student achievement.

Reading, writing and mathematics are the foundation of a strong education. One week ago, your government announced \$25 million to expand the Early Reading program and introduce a new Early Math program across the province.



Ontario's young people with special needs must also have the support they require in our school system. Your government will continue to make support for special education a priority.

Your government is committed to attracting the best people to the teaching profession and enabling them to excel, ensuring that their skills and knowledge stay up to date. It will ensure that teachers have the training they need to teach the new curriculum and will work with them on a means of measuring the currency of their skills in today's learning environment.

Your government remains committed to choice and fairness in Ontario's education system. Working together with parents, your government will design a means of measuring the progress of students in core subjects as it implements the Equity in Education Tax Credit.

Equality of opportunity is also the goal of our post-secondary education system. Capable students, regardless of their economic circumstances, deserve the chance for a brighter future.

That is why your government introduced the Student Opportunity Trust Fund to help thousands of young people get a post-secondary education. Approximately 185,000 students who have the academic qualifications but lack the financial resources will benefit from the fund. Your government will increase that fund to give 400,000 students over the next decade the chance to reach their potential.

Because some students require extra support throughout their studies, your government will expand the Learning Opportunities Program. Under the direction of Dr. Bette Stephenson, the program helps students with learning disabilities take advantage of post-secondary learning opportunities. Your government will expand the program to include all of Ontario's 18 public universities and 24 community colleges.

Students and their parents want to know that the dream of a post-secondary education can be pursued right here in Ontario. That is why your government made the single-largest capital investment in colleges and universities in more than 30 years.

Standing firmly behind its commitment that willing and qualified Ontario students will have a place in our post-secondary system, your government and its partners provided an additional \$1.8 billion to create 73,000 new student spaces across the province. Building on these previous commitments, your government will provide



further resources to post-secondary institutions to meet the higher-than-projected student demand.

Ontario has already committed to an additional \$293 million for investments in teaching and supplies and it will work with colleges and universities to accommodate more Ontario students in the post-secondary system.

One example of innovation has been expanding applied degrees to colleges. Your government will work with education providers to further expand this program and find other solutions that recognize the needs of both students and industry as we improve our competitiveness throughout the world.

Ontarians should have an opportunity to work and develop their skills in their own communities. That is why your government believes in province-wide access to leading-edge apprenticeship and training programs.

In the spirit of co-operation, Ontario's Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities invites the federal government to sign the Labour Market Development Agreement. This agreement would allow Ontarians to access almost \$600 million in apprenticeship and skills-training funds.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND INNOVATION

Successive generations of industrious and innovative Ontarians have built a multi-faceted, high-tech, manufacturing and exporting powerhouse that generates incredible wealth.

Your government has not lost sight of the fact that Ontario has regained its place as the engine of prosperity in Canada through hard work and the commitment of all Ontarians:

882,700 new jobs in Ontario since 1995 — 59,400 in the last six months alone;

600,000 people who have a paycheque instead of a welfare cheque;

More young families who are discovering the pride and freedom that come with owning a home;

Robust job creation, consumer and business confidence, consumer spending and housing markets point to growth — proof that Ontario is on the right track.



But the job of keeping Ontario competitive is not done. It will never be done.

Your government will continue to focus on improving Ontario's competitiveness through tax cuts.

Your government will look to the experiences — the successes and the challenges — of the last seven years. It will seek the ideas of the enterprising women and men of this province for ways to be more competitive and increase productivity — the keys to keeping our province a leader in Canada and a competitive force around the world.

This province was not immune to the market and economic fallout of the September 11th attack on our closest neighbour and largest trading partner.

The ensuing economic slowdown continues to resonate today and it has affected the province's financial resources.

Dealing with this situation will require continued sound fiscal management and difficult decisions. Your government is prepared to make those decisions and take the necessary action to keep Ontario strong and growing.

More than 1 million Ontario jobs depend on trade with the province's largest trading partner, the United States. In the year 2001 alone, Ontario exported more than \$200 billion in goods and services to the United States. Your government believes that the only way Ontario will continue to be prosperous is to maintain the free flow of goods, services and people across the border.

The newly created Ministry of Public Safety and Security will help maintain the physical and economic security of Ontario. There will be a central leadership role for the ministry, which bridges all provincial ministries and agencies.

Following September 11th, your government took measures such as passing tough new legislation to protect vital documents, including birth certificates. Your government will continue to provide security but it cannot proceed alone. That is why it wants to work with Ottawa to create a North American security perimeter so that border trade and travel can continue to flow smoothly and safely.

Your government recognizes the importance of working with the federal government to enrich the arts and cultural institutions. Your Minister of Culture will play an active role in this important initiative.



To enable all regions of this province to take advantage of Ontario's growth and compete in a global economy, our province needs a continuous supply of innovative ideas and policies. The new Ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation is a clear demonstration of your government's commitment to competitiveness through innovation.

Globally, Ontario is a leader in the biotechnology sector. Reflecting this strength, in June, Toronto will host the Bio2002 conference, the world's largest biotechnology conference.

Your government continues to promote research and innovation through its Research and Development Challenge Fund. Since 1997, the fund has announced more than \$377 million of public-sector funding and leveraged nearly \$1 billion in private-sector investments for 88 projects in universities, colleges, hospitals and research institutions around the province.

It will also expand its investment in the knowledge economy by supporting universities and research institutions in creative ways. For example, it has entered a partnership to help create a Medical and Related Services Discovery District in downtown Toronto, which will help move medical research forward. It has also committed to a research and technology park at the University of Waterloo, which will employ up to 6,000 people.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE TODAY AND TOMORROW

Ontario is a global leader in cancer research, but your government believes it can do more to fight this devastating disease, which takes so many forms and affects so many families.

Today, over half of all adults and 75 per cent of children diagnosed with cancer survive. Your government will work to eradicate this disease and will launch a concentrated effort to combat its two leading killers, breast and prostate cancer.

Leading scientists and medical experts say that finding a cure for breast and prostate cancer is achievable in the next decade. Ontario's Research and Development Challenge Fund will lead a team of experts in this endeavor.

Ontario has the expertise. It has the will. It has the innovators and it will devote even more resources to find that cure.



Also, your government will immediately expand the scope of Ontario's Cancer Research Network Fund so research on all forms of cancer will be eligible for funding. Over the next three years, your government will expand the number of clinical trials for promising new treatments so that twice as many patients can benefit from this research.

We all feel a sense of pride in our universal health care system, which has been the envy of the world since it was established nearly 40 years ago. Today, however, that system is under stress because of the pressures of a growing and aging population and the cost of new technologies and treatments.

The Kirby and Mazankowski reports, together with the upcoming Romanow Commission report, all discuss the future of health care. And your government has undertaken its own consultation with patients, their families and health care providers all across our province.

People across Ontario have said the same things.

Ontarians want a system that encourages wellness and healthy living.

Ontarians want a quick and accurate diagnosis.

Ontarians want access to timely treatment.

Ontarians want to be able to find nurses and a family doctor in their own communities.

Your government has heard you. It is acting to respond to your concerns. Your government is committed to improving access so Ontarians can get the care they need where and when they need it.

This is a new era in Ontario, and the process to fix our health care system has only just begun.

Since 1995, 31 new MRIs have been added, bringing the total in the province to 43. Your government will continue to add to the number of MRI machines and will begin immediately to increase their OHIP-funded hours of operation by 90 per cent.



Your government will find more innovative ways to deliver and expand other diagnostic and treatment procedures and services so they are more accessible to all Ontarians.

All Ontarians, no matter where they live, must have health care close to home. Today in our province, there are many people who don't have doctors and communities that are under-serviced. Families in many communities urgently need more physicians.

Ontario has started to address this problem by helping to pay the tuition of doctors who choose to locate in areas that need doctors.

But there is more to do.

Your government will proceed with a new northern medical school. Full campuses in Sudbury and Thunder Bay will train more doctors and encourage them to practise in the north.

Your government will work with the health-care community in Ontario to encourage more foreign-trained doctors to locate in under-serviced areas and increase the certification rate of these skilled individuals.

Family Health Networks, designed to increase access to service, are another important part of your government's plan. Fourteen pilot projects are underway around Ontario, and the government's target is to have 80 per cent of eligible family physicians practising in networks.

One important component of Family Health Networks valued by many Ontarians is nurse practitioners.

That is why your government will work to break down the barriers faced by nurse practitioners. Your government will more than double the number of nurse practitioners and expand their role to include long-term care facilities, community health centres and emergency rooms. Nurse practitioners will be encouraged to work in communities that have been without physicians for an extended period of time.

Just yesterday, your Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced \$3 million in projects that would see 12 communities — which had previously been without a family physician for an extended period of time — cared for by nurse practitioners.



Your government knows that, if money were the only solution, Ontario's health care problems would be solved by now. Money alone is not the solution. Neither is the status quo.

Your government recognizes the private sector's contribution in our publicly funded system — as donors and supporters of our hospitals and research and also in the delivery of many services. Your government is committed to finding new ways to foster innovation, based on partnerships with the private sector, while preserving our universally accessible health care.

Ontario is eager to move toward multi-year base funding for our hospitals. This funding model allows hospitals to better plan around the needs of their communities and those who need care. As it moves towards its goal of multi-year base funding, Ontario needs the federal government's partnership in health care.

Your government believes that leadership on health care in today's Ontario means having the courage to debate honestly, while protecting the universality of the single-tier system that is a hallmark of our province and our country.

Fixing our system will require strength, courage and commitment on the part of all governments and indeed all citizens — those who use the services and those who provide them — to admit what has not worked and to reach out to find what will work.

Your government's health-care strategy will be guided by a clear goal — improving access in a sustainable way for the people of this province, no matter where they live.

Your new government is prepared to be a leader in addressing the problems that face the health care system, but that will not be easy. It will require the strength to lead. The courage to listen. The will to do what is right.

PLANNING TO MEET THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF ALL REGIONS

Ontario's diverse neighbourhoods, people and geography make our province the best place in the world to live, work and raise a family. Ontario is a dynamic mix of 165 cultural communities. Its blend of voices, beliefs and backgrounds enriches us all, both culturally and economically.



Recognizing the benefits of our diversity, your government will host an international conference showcasing Ontario's successes and exploring the ways our diverse and talented population can help strengthen our global competitiveness.

Your government will celebrate our ethnic and regional diversity and use its strength to benefit citizens all across the province.

In doing so, your government also recognizes that different areas of Ontario face different challenges. That is why, for the first time, Ontario has two associate ministers to address the specific needs of urban and rural Ontario. It also has a plan to keep all of Ontario's communities strong.

Ontario's Smart Growth plan will promote and manage growth in ways that sustain a strong economy, build strong communities and promote a healthy environment. Smart Growth is a flexible yet comprehensive plan to deal with the pressures of Ontario's growing population and its need for new transit and roads as well as its need to keep goods and people moving. Finding ways to promote and manage growth in ways that make sense for each region is the job of Ontario's Smart Growth panels. These panels bring together a broad range of interests — governments, businesses, community and environmental groups — to help ensure a high quality of life for all citizens now and in the future.

Investing in an efficient, modern public transit system is another part of the plan. Your government's \$9-billion transit plan will help ensure that Ontario has a transit system that keeps people moving and protects the environment. Your government is confident it can work with its federal and municipal partners to support Ontario's Transit Renewal Program.

Your government will also study transit innovations like the multi-system transit card, which will improve customer service by creating a seamless trip for riders across a region's large and complex network.

Planning for the future means developing a modern, safe and efficient highway system to link Ontario's diverse cities and towns, relieve congestion on our roads and help all regions prosper. Your government will continue to invest to expand and maintain our province's highways.

Planning for the future also means allowing smaller and more remote regions of the province to take advantage of the economic growth seen in larger urban centres. That is why your government will introduce legislation to create tax-incentive zones. These zones will encourage both large and small businesses to invest, relocate or



expand in rural and northern communities, creating economic growth and giving young people the opportunity to live, work, raise a family and give back to the communities where they grew up.

Appropriate funding is also vital to planning at the community level. Municipalities must be able to move forward with important infrastructure projects such as new water-treatment facilities, sewers and roads. Your government will introduce legislation to allow municipalities to offer Opportunity Bonds tax-free to investors, allowing for more infrastructure development and giving municipalities more control at the local level.

Planning for the future also means protecting our traditions. We must remember that agriculture is not only a business. It is a way of life; and it is a way of life that is at risk.

As one of his first actions, your Premier met with members of the agricultural community. On June 6, at a round table to be held in Guelph, your government will again meet with farm leaders to identify key issues and establish priorities to keep Ontario's agricultural sector vibrant.

Your government is concerned about the possible implications of family farm unionization. While respecting individual and constitutional rights, it will work to protect farmers and their livelihoods in what have proven to be challenging times. Ontario's harvests and food supply must not be vulnerable to disruptions caused by strikes and lockouts.

Like Ontario's farmers, your government understands that protecting the environment is vital to the future of the family farm. It remains committed to the Nutrient Management Bill, which would protect the environment by setting and enforcing clear, consistent standards for nutrient management on farms.

PLANNING STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

Planning for the future also means protecting our water and air.

In recognition of this, your government will move forward with its clean-water strategy to ensure a clean supply of water for future generations.



Your government knows that we must all work harder to protect and preserve our environment. Our environment should be a legacy we pass on to our children and grandchildren. It should not be a burden for them to bear.

Your government is committed to ensuring that Ontario has and enforces the best and toughest clean-water policy in the world. Ontario's Clean Water Legacy Trust will focus your government's actions, policies, reporting and enforcement efforts towards this critical goal. It will use its resources to bring federal, local and private-sector funding to the table to rebuild our water infrastructure.

A Clean Water Centre of Excellence, located in Walkerton, will co-ordinate research and training for those who work in the field. This centre will link the best research and the best scientific minds available.

All 28 recommendations in Justice O'Connor's first report on Walkerton are being implemented. Your government will take additional steps in response to Justice O'Connor's second report, expected later this month.

Your government also believes that we must explore 21st-century sources of energy. Your government looks forward to the report by the Select Committee on Alternative Fuels, expected at the end of this month. The report will help guide the government as it works with Ontario's environmental industries to keep our air clean and promote green sources of power, such as wind and hydrogen power.

PROTECTING CONSUMERS AND ONTARIO'S ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Just as our health system is a hallmark of our society, so too is our reliable supply of electricity. For generations, it has powered our province's industries and generated much of our wealth.

It is necessary to renew and expand our electricity infrastructure to meet the needs of our growing and changing province. Your government understands the recent significant events that have taken place in the energy sector and recognizes the need to ensure that Ontarians can depend on having reliable, accessible and affordable electricity today and in the future.

Your Premier has clearly stated that your government's plans for restructuring Ontario's electricity sector will include four important objectives:



First, it will ensure an efficient supply of energy that is competitive for the people of Ontario and in the international marketplace.

Second, it will ensure that the necessary capital is provided to rebuild and modernize the transmission and distribution of power in Ontario.

Third, it will bring market discipline to Hydro One — the province's transmission company — and prevent any possibility of the recurrence of staggering debts, such as the current \$38 billion debt, while eliminating it.

And fourth, it will achieve these goals while protecting consumers.

Your government believes the people of Ontario should have a voice in the future direction of one of Ontario's most important resources. Your government has the courage to listen, the willingness to consult and the ability to take the right course of action in the interest of all Ontarians.

KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE

Your government will also act to protect communities, families and individuals.

Your government is committed to protecting children caught in the misery of prostitution and holding those who would profit from their exploitation accountable for the consequences of their actions.

Every year, thousands of children see violence in their homes. These children are at risk and often continue a legacy of family violence themselves. Your government will continue to help children who are trapped in violent family situations.

Your government has zero tolerance for violence against women. It is encouraged by the progress that has been made and it will continue to build on relationships with shelters, educators, legal-advocacy programs and child-care centres on ways to support front-line workers. Domestic violence tears families apart, targets the vulnerable and destroys communities. Your government will continue its fight against this crime.

Biker gangs pose another threat to our communities. Your government will continue to support the OPP anti-biker gang squad to protect our communities.



Your government will create a task force to help reform correctional services in Ontario in consultation with stakeholders, front-line staff and management. It will also use state-of-the-art electronic surveillance technologies to more closely supervise and monitor targeted offenders to keep them accountable and our communities safe.

Your government will continue to ensure that police officers, firefighters and paramedics have the tools and training they need to do their vital jobs.

They — and we — will sleep more soundly, knowing that our communities are safe.

CONCLUSION

This spring, the hard-working people of Ontario are looking ahead with a renewed sense of optimism because we know we have much for which to be thankful.

We know that our province is strong because its people are strong.

We see that strength in our teachers, whose patience, professionalism and wisdom make them great role models for our children.

We see it in the compassion, dedication and devotion of our nurses and doctors.

We see it in the duty and honour of our police officers, firefighters and soldiers who serve and protect us.

We see it in the entrepreneurs, small business owners, factory workers, public servants, volunteers and countless others whose hard work is the heartbeat of a great province.

We know that we are rich in diversity, plentiful in resources and blessed with peace and safety.

We know that, by working together, we can ensure that communities, cultures and individuals all across our province can flourish and grow.

Your government knows that, with continued diligence, sound fiscal management and competitive tax measures, Ontario will see more jobs, more prosperity and greater opportunity.



Your government knows that the trust of Ontario's citizens is something that must be earned each day.

Your government will work hard to earn that trust.

God bless Canada. God bless Ontario. God save the Queen.