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| ***Province*** | ***Législature*** | ***Session*** | ***Type de discours*** | ***Date du discours*** | ***Locuteur*** | ***Fonction du locuteur*** | ***Parti politique*** |
| Ontario | 30e  | 3e | Discours du Trône | 9 mars 1976 | Pauline McGibbon | Lieutenant Governor | Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario |

Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

Au nom de notre souveraine, je vous souhaite la bienvenue a l'ouverture de la troisieme session de la trentieme Legislature de 1'Ontario.

I welcome you, in our Sovereign's name, to the opening of the third session of the 30th Parliament of Ontario.

This Legislature is called into session at a time of optimism about Ontario's ability to maintain the quality of life of its citizens and a time of careful evaluation of the opportunities open to the province. Our province today faces some critical economic realities. The economic vitality and protection of its people require, as never before, a capacity to make choices and set priorities.

In recognizing this, the government of Ontario has supported and will continue to play its full role in the national anti-inflation programme, as part of its greater commitment to protect the well-being of millions of citizens.

My government has no illusions about the capacity of the national anti-inflation programme to perform without flaw or inequity. Continuing discussions relating to appeal procedures and the general performance of the Anti-Inflation Board will be pursued throughout the spring. Profit restrictions and wage limitations imposed on the public should be reflected in similar limitations on government spending at all levels.

For its part, Ontario will continue to curtail its costs and to reorder its priorities in the provincial and national interest, in the hope that other governments and the private sector will be encouraged in the battle against inflation.

Such restraint will allow consolidation and security of essential services in Ontario. We now enjoy one of the finest and most complete social service systems in the world. To maintain and preserve what Ontarians have worked to achieve in this field, it is necessary to streamline government programmes regularly to prune out redundancies or waste that might arise.

The province's financial commitment to health, education, social and municipal programmes will not be reduced. The 1976 Ontario budget to be introduced by the Treasurer on April 6 will indicate that the province will be spending more on all these services than ever before. Needed constraints are being applied in certain areas so that essential services may continue to be provided with adequate funds and, where necessary, be permitted to expand.

We must face the fact that government spending at all levels is a major cause of inflation. It is a time for the government, for the Legislature, for agencies receiving public funds and for the people to reassess programmes and define priorities in terms of needs rather than wants.

This year, the increase in provincial funds transferred to the municipal sector will be eight per cent over the amount transferred last year. Municipalities and school boards will be responsible for ordering their priorities, with a view to an acceptable municipal tax load, municipal services and local needs.

The challenge in the years ahead will be to preserve the quality of the social and material environment that has been created. My government believes this can best be done by maintaining a healthy climate for free enterprise which, in turn, will provide the capital investment and the new job opportunities that are needed. Employment security is the only real income security a free society can afford for the vast majority of its citizens.

By limiting government activity to essential services, vital capital and manpower will be available for a more productive and buoyant economy. Unnecessary expansion of colleges, universities, schools, hospitals and other major capital projects will be curtailed wherever possible. Highway construction not yet commenced will be limited to the most essential work.

A strong economy will require the cooperation of labour and the private sector to protect our standard of living, employment levels and international competitiveness. Specific foreign trade initiatives, aimed at exporting complete large-scale development projects, will be pursued through overseas trade programmes with a view to generating jobs in Ontario.

There are few problems more urgent than dispute resolution in the labour relations field. The Ministry of Labour will intensify its examination of the collective bargaining process with the aim of recommending substantive changes to reduce the incidence of industrial conflict.

Legislation will be introduced to provide that public funds which are not spent because of strikes by school board employees will be returned to the public through reduction of local taxes.

My government is aware of its responsibility to ensure that those who are in genuine need receive social assistance. On the other hand, those who have alternatives to assistance must utilize them to contribute to their own well- being. People who have opportunities for employment, whether part-time, seasonal or full- time, will be required to take advantage of those options and, in fact, seek them. A sys- tem will also be initiated to provide recipients of financial assistance more active help in locating employment.

The government believes that universal accessibility for all citizens of Ontario to an efficient and technologically superior health care system is a critical priority for the tax- payer. The Ministry of Health will, therefore, concentrate on improving the provincial health system to maintain the highest levels of health care while at the same time making it as cost-effective as possible. Savings will be achieved, affecting three to four per cent of the total present hospital service capacity in the province by reducing the total number of beds, and by amalgamation of services among hospitals in the same area.

There will be no reduction in nursing home beds. The budget for ambulance programmes and research will be maintained with no reduction. Community health programmes for children and adults, public health units and home care programmes will continue to receive strong support. Occupational health service will receive top priority.

My government gives the assurance that all essential health care needs of the people of this province will be met. It must be emphasized that the constraints being implemented are cost-effective measures. The over- all results will allow health resources to be used more effectively for the benefit of all who need them.

The long-term security of Ontario depends in great measure on the protection of our agricultural production. To this end, in sup- port of an overall effort to achieve a national plan for the farming community, provincial legislation will be introduced to establish a voluntary farm income stabilization plan.

To strengthen consumer price measurement and assist in the overall assessment of the national anti-inflation programme, the role of the Ontario Food Council will be expanded in its research and public information functions.

Stricter meat inspection and improved livestock and poultry protection will be enforced.

Ontario will seek reciprocal safeguards for agricultural products in negotiations, with the government of Canada prior to the international discussions on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. As well, marketing activities in overseas trade missions will be promoted through the Ontario Food Council.

You will be asked to support development goals for increased productivity of agricultural lands, and the use of less productive land wherever possible for more housing units.

The government will propose change to the Mining Tax Act which, by altering the tax treatment of exploration expenses, will make exploration as attractive in years of low- metal prices as in boom times. Exploration activity is vital 'o the mining industry, which has been a stable contributor to the economy of northern Ontario for more than 30 years and has maintained an employment level of 50,000 people.

The government will seek the support of the House for a programme of legislation to improve the administration of justice in Ontario. The judiciary will be expanded to meet the backlog of cases in all levels of courts. A Blind Persons' Rights Act will entrench in law, rights for blind members of the community. Reforms in estates law will include revisions concerning the rights of children and spouses in property matters.

A New Home Warranties Act will make provision for registration of home builders and administration of a warranty plan to protect home buyers from builder defaults and poor workmanship.

A study of the rise in alcohol-related driving offences, particularly by young people, is now under way and will be complete during this session. Based on information received through public forums and expert ad- vice, a series of initiatives will be proposed to respond to this problem. The overall question of highway safety, accident prevention and driver education will be referred to a select committee of the Legislature for preparation of legislative recommendations to the assembly.

The prospect of energy supply shortages and price increases is a continuing concern. The government will maintain its policy of protecting the consuming public and industrial users in Ontario from energy shortages, while making every effort, short of subsidization, to cushion the effects of higher energy prices. It is my government's intention to represent strongly the interests of the consuming public and the industrial sector of Ontario in discussions with the federal government and other provinces.

A programme to upgrade insulation and energy conservation features in public buildings will be initiated in provincial buildings, hospitals and educational facilities. New buildings will be subject to higher thermal performance standards. This will establish a base for co-operation with the private sector to stimulate further energy savings.

The capacity of Ontario's economy to grow through the vitality of the private sector must be protected. This will generate the wealth that is necessary to ensure economic opportunity and employment security for all Ontarians, while maintaining government services in the fields of justice, health and education, and social programmes.

My government seeks the support of all members of the Legislature in guiding Ontario evenly through challenging economic times. Responsible, purposeful and limited government, aimed at increasing productivity, achieving economic stability and avoiding economic risks or hardship for the individual citizen, is the key to a brighter, secure and more promising future for all citizens of Ontario.

Honourable members, as you begin this new session, I wish you well in carrying out these and other important and demanding duties in the service of Ontario and its people.

God bless the Queen and Canada.