

Hansard transcript

December 13, 2007

39th Parliament

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'm proud to rise today as a representative for the riding of Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, to stand up and to speak out for the people of my riding as their Progressive Conservative member. Isn't it fitting that a brand new riding has the opportunity to bring a brand new message to Toronto and Queen's Park, a brand new message delivered with conviction, spoken with passion and that resonates with resolve and respect?

The people of Ontario and my riding are blessed with an exceptional ancestry and rich history. Our forefathers came here long ago into a vast land of wilderness and hardships, with little more than their dreams and ambitions on their backs and in their minds. However, they would not recognize Ontario today with all our modern technology, our highways, hospitals, high-rises, industry, and schools, and with so many conveniences. But all of what we have today is built on the foundations that our ancestors laid.

Many of our ancestors came from the Old World, where property ownership, individual freedoms and political representation was unknown. These rights and freedoms were the exclusive domain and privilege of the aristocracy, but with their new freedoms and their labours, they built a new world and a new country. They created prosperity with freedom.

However, if our ancestors could see Ontario today, they would see that many of the rights, freedoms and justice that they cherished are being eroded, and we must help to rebuild them. They would see the Old World aristocracy they fled migrating into a New World bureaucracy. The people in my riding and myself know that when legislation removes the individual's responsibility, we create an irresponsible society, and if we remove the rights and freedoms of others, we will lose our own rights tomorrow. We also know that respect for the law is complete only when laws respect people.

The Premier's response to my questions last week illustrate the growing difference between urban and rural Ontario, a difference filled with a cradle full of nanny-state legislation. Last week, I was referred to as an anti-government champion. Whether I'm a champion or not, I do not know, but I am a strong advocate for good government.

The Premier also stated that he has significantly different views than I. Well, I'm sure that's clear to everyone here. I would say that we are at least a country mile apart on our views about Ontario. The Premier illustrated the difference, saying that he can't take care of his lands—he needs government to do this; that he can't educate or care for his children—he needs government to do that as well; and that he can't build the economy—he needs government. "Can't" is the word that characterizes the Liberal government, and what I am not.

In rural Ontario, we can: We can take care of our lands and our waters, we can take care of our children and our families, and we can build our economy, if the government stops telling us we can't. In rural Ontario, we know that governments are created to prevent injustice, not to create injustice; that government is here to represent the people, not to fund special interest groups; that

government is here to protect people and their property from others, not from themselves; and that rewards are found by taking risks. Eliminate risk, and rewards are lost. Our true heritage and our unique culture must flourish throughout Ontario, both urban and rural—people who can, not people who can't.

I learned a lesson a long time ago: If you tolerate injustice, you will accept tyranny; if you tolerate falsehoods, you will breed liars; if you tolerate a little bit of stealing, you will encourage cheaters; if you tolerate excuses, you create dishonesty. The lesson in life is clear: In life, you get what you tolerate.

I prefer honesty over tolerance. Political correctness is often the cause of this tolerance. We have become fearful to speak truthfully for fear of offending someone, somewhere, some time. However, it's better to be truthful than to make excuses.

As I look back on the flowery words and the beautiful phrases of the throne speech, the government claims to have a plan for today's economy. It claims to have a plan for jobs, the best jobs, to build the strongest economy, to work with businesses and labour to attract, retain, and create good, high-paying jobs. Then I look at the reality: the tobacco farmers going bankrupt by government policy, the butcher shops being forced to close, the mills in the forests full of layoffs and silence. I see a never-ending attack of expensive overregulation that is destroying our small businesses. Our contractors cannot hire our youth because of rigid apprenticeship ratios, and the cost of doing business in Ontario is so high, people are leaving or simply closing their doors.

In my view, our rural economy and industries such as Hershey's, Nestlé and Domtar must stay in Ontario, not leave for Mexico or China, and they cannot be placed on Ontario's endangered species list. In my view, we must remove the red tape, the regulations and the incompetence so that our farmers' markets, our tourist resorts, our sawmills and our butchers can flourish, not flounder—and where our children can expect more than a minimum wage.

A throne speech full of hollow words ought to be expected after four years of broken promises. I know that legislation for the public good grows government and that legislation that protects individual freedoms trims the bureaucracy, that legislation requires objectives in order to measure accountability, that people who bear the consequence of legislation must be the decision-makers and also own the expense. Finally, I understand that there is an exception to every rule, and that legislation is needed for those rare circumstances, not the common occurrence.

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For two weeks now, I have witnessed the workings of our provincial Parliament. I see representatives who have put forth significant time and effort to be elected and who have an unquenchable thirst and desire and vivid dreams to make changes and improve our province. However, I also see theatrics. I hear the scripted lines of the actors and the actresses, the cameo roles of the stars. I see the makeup artists, the stage hands and the special effects people. They are all here to create a wonderful illusion and fine entertainment.

I'm here to advocate for the people of Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, to provide them value and to show them that their democracy and mine is real, it is tangible and it is concrete.

I know that the reality of government is that privileges, no matter how small they may be, create injustice; that the size of government increases as the level of individual responsibility decreases; that those closest to the problem are best suited to solve the problem; and that political leaders are chosen to lead, not to follow.

Recently, there has been much talk regarding electoral reform and even a referendum. It must be clear to all of us here in this House that what is really needed is parliamentary reform.

When I look through the looking glass, I see that only 52% of the people still bother to vote and find value in this Legislature. I look forward to restoring the confidence of the other 48% and to giving them cause to participate in our democracy. We know that what we need is freedom, democracy and justice, not the nanny-state mentality so prevalent in today's Liberal government thinking.

I want to reiterate the pride I feel for having been chosen by the people of my riding as their voice and as their representative in this Legislature. I look forward to the years ahead, working with my colleagues in making a more prosperous Ontario, a more effective Parliament, an Ontario that is full of honest and reasoned discussion and debate and where the Queen's Park inscription in the hallways, "Where minds and souls find freedom," resonates throughout Ontario.

I'd like to thank everyone and wish you all a very merry Christmas.