



Ted Chudleigh

Speeches in the Legislature at Queen's Park

April 7 - 17
2008

April 7th, 2008 – Question Period

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is for the Premier. On Friday, StatsCan released the national job numbers based on its monthly labour force survey. The numbers looked good at first, with thousands of new jobs being created in March across Canada. However, upon closer reading, the numbers were not so uplifting in Ontario. The positive results are due to significant gains in the Canadian west and are offset by losses at home. Ontario lost 2,000 net jobs in March, and it gets worse. Ignoring gains in part-time work, Ontario lost 24,000 full-time jobs in one month. That means the Liberal retraining program for 20,000 Ontario workers won't even cover losses for the month of March.

Premier, your patchwork programs and high-tax strategies aren't working. Unfortunately, the grim predictions of this opposition are coming true. Will you commit now to a new direction for Ontario and create a more competitive atmosphere for businesses?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The minister's optimism is endearing but inappropriate. Your government is engaged in a classic example of Peter Pan economics. That's where you sit around in a circle holding hands and wishing with all your might until things magically change for the better. Unfortunately, no amount of happy thoughts or pixie dust will fix the broken reality of Ontario's economy. Ontario just shed 24,000 jobs in 31 days. Ontario unemployment is up again, straying further from the national average. The public sector is bloated. The sunshine list is longer than ever. Ontarians are fleeing in record numbers. The manufacturing sector is in shambles. US consumers are bracing for a recession. The Premier smiles and gives us a pat on our collective head. Everything is not fine, Minister. Corporate handouts and retraining may save a few jobs, but what do you say to the hundreds of thousands of workers who remain unemployed because of your stubborn refusal to get on the right track? If you can't acknowledge the realities of the present, how can Ontarians trust you with their future?

April 9, 2008 – Question Period

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is for the Minister of

Economic Development and Trade. The secrecy surrounding this minister's junket to Beijing is perplexing. She boasts about the importance of this so-called trade mission but has kept the details far from the press and away from opposition members. We can't do our job if we don't know the details.

The secrecy continues. I've asked for information on all the names of all the people-not just staff-who will be joining the junket; not just the minister and staff, but what companies are going, as well as the itinerary, the dates and the total cost. I have yet to receive anything in writing. Perhaps the saying "Don't put it in writing" applies here, especially when it looks like the minister has something or someone to hide.

Will the minister explain why she has yet to publicize the exact dates, the costs and detailed itinerary of her junket? Will she provide me with this information today?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: This junket is being planned at a time when the federal government and even the mayor of Toronto are promising to put serious diplomatic pressure on China regarding human rights.

Yesterday, the Premier washed his hands of foreign obligations, saying that he simply follows the lead of the federal government. On the other hand, he stated the importance of a policy of engagement with China. The Premier can't have it both ways.

Serious trade missions are indeed important for trade. However, given the current oppression of Tibetans, a friendly ribbon cutting is not all that opportune. If that is the case, will the minister protect Ontario's and Canada's international reputation and cancel her tactless and irresponsible junket immediately?

April 10, 2008 – Debate on Government Bill 35 – Investing in Ontario Act (Actually, an act to legalize Liberal slush-funds)

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The member is interesting. She says that this party isn't interested in investing in Ontario. She calls this bill an investment in Ontario. This bill-understand that this bill is slush fund heaven. Before this bill is finished, everybody in Ontario is going to be

promised a little payout from the slush fund. The cricket clubs all across the province are going to get their share. Every group in Ontario is going to get its share.

As the member for Niagara pointed out, there's no mention—the municipalities have been promised this slush fund, but there is no mention in the bill of municipalities. In fact, the way it's worded, the government could designate any group they wish, other than those groups that I think the people of Ontario would like to fund such as hospitals, colleges, universities, school boards and those kinds of things. They can't be funded by this slush fund heaven that the government is working on, but any other non-profit group in the province can be. Before this bill is finished, the government will promise this, not only to the municipalities that they've already promised it to—every mayor in Ontario thinks he's getting some money out of this. In fact, every organization and pressure group in Ontario will be promised this money, whether they get it or not. It's legalizing slush funds that will flow out the door with very little control over who gets it, how they spend it, where it goes and what benefits it creates for Ontario. I think if you surveyed Ontarians, you would find that the vast majority of Ontarians would see this kind of money going to hospitals, schools or universities as a good thing. It's not happening.

The member talks about Bill 35 as if it's going to be a great saviour of Ontario. I say again: This bill is slush fund heaven. It is going to legalize slush funds. It's going to allow the government to hand out taxpayers' money without taking due account of where that money is going to go, without ensuring that there is a long-term program associated with that money, without ensuring that the money is going to be well spent in the areas of which taxpayers of Ontario want that money to be spent: on projects that are important to the taxpayers of Ontario, projects like health care issues, universities, colleges, school boards—those areas that make Ontario the great province that it is today.

This money is going to go to the four corners of the province in a willy-nilly manner without due process, and without the careful adjudication of ensuring the money is well spent in the best possible way. I think that's a shame.

We saw the money in the federal arena that the Liberal government under Paul Martin, when he was Prime Minister—we saw that money flow out the door, hundreds of millions of dollars going to the Adscam process, which was kind of like a slush fund. We saw under the McGuinty government, about a year ago today, as was pointed out by my friend from Niagara during his comments in the House, that that money flowed out without due process—\$1 million going to the Toronto cricket club.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It's always amazing to me how much I agree with the NDP. Although we're on different

ends of the political spectrum, I certainly respect the member's point of view. It's also interesting that, as the member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell pointed out, there's a bunch of money going up there. This guy had better get onside, or we'll pull it back. That's called "greasing the wheels." The Minister of Education talks about greasing the wheels and how things can get going. That's exactly what you talked about.

There are some people in the province who aren't influenced by money that flows. They're influenced by what is right and what is wrong. It's called integrity. It's something that is totally lacking in this government today. Fiduciary responsibility is something that the member from Newmarket-Aurora talked about, and fiduciary responsibility is something that you also have no concept of because it goes hand in hand with integrity. When you are handling someone else's money, you have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that you do what is right with that money. Creating a slush-fund heaven isn't living up to the fiduciary responsibility of a government, and that will come back to haunt you.

The integrity of this government is so lacking that the future of this government is in serious jeopardy because of the road that you are going down and the lack of fiduciary responsibility that you're showing for the hard-earned taxpayers' dollars of this province.

April 10th, 2008 – Private Member's Business (A Resolution brought forth by Mr. Chudleigh regarding the proposed Liberal Tire Tax)

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the McGuinty government should agree to define its proposed tire tax as a "tax," like the \$2.6-billion health tax, and the McGuinty government should immediately cancel all plans to implement the \$60-million tax on purchasing new tires, which will impact all Ontarians.

This is an interesting resolution. It's an interesting proposal by the government. Opposition to a tire tax does not in any way suppose that I am against recycling, against environmental protection or against environmental legislation generally. In fact, my record speaks for itself. I have been adamant in this House for the past 13 years in supporting the environment, environmental causes and recycling.

My record speaks for itself, going as far back as the Oak Ridges moraine, where I remember voting in favour of protecting the Oak Ridges moraine at the time when the government which I was a part of was not in favour, although about a year later we did pass legislation saying that the Oak Ridges moraine needed protection.

The Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act is such that I'm very comfortable with my environmental record going back to land purchases and supporting the environment in those areas as well.

Members across the aisle, I'm sure, will be standing in their place and accusing me of thwarting their environmental cause, and they'll probably try to take credit for being the only party in Ontario that cares about the environment. I want to let the House know that I have grave concerns about those statements.

The environment is rightly becoming a very non-partisan issue in this House. I think that's a very important place for the environment and environmental issues to be. We should stop the games and get on with the meat of the issue: how best to protect the environment without punishing Ontario consumers and weakening an already hurting economy. The environment and the management of waste is of paramount concern.

I fully support the government's intention to deal with the problems surrounding the disposal of used tires.

However, my support ends there; there is no shining city on the hill that we can look to to find a solution to this difficult problem. However, there are a lot of examples around the world that would lead one to believe that there are solutions, albeit piecemeal, that we could adopt. If we took this seriously, we could be the first jurisdiction that selects those successful programs from around the world, and we would indeed become the shining city on the hill that people would look to when they talk about an environmental jurisdiction that says what it does and means what it says.

Once again, I believe this government is trying to impose an unpopular tax. I'm not sure why they would do this. They're calling it a fee, but I don't think that's going to fool anyone. A major point of this resolution is the semantics, that the government insists that this tax is a fee. They do this to avoid looking hypocritical after the Premier promised no new taxes not long ago. Call it what you want; this is a tax, plain and simple. Claiming it's a fee because it doesn't add to consolidated revenues but instead goes to extra-special stewardship programs certainly doesn't change the fact that this fee is indeed a tax or a levy or a duty, or whatever you would like to call it. It's coming out of Ontario's taxpayers' pockets, and when that happens, it's called a tax in my book. I hope that goes down in Hansard and I hope that is regurgitated some time in the future. Anything that comes out of the taxpayers' pocket, whether it be a duty, a fee or a tax, is in fact a tax. There is only one taxpayer, and he's gravely overworked.

A little bit of history on this subject: In 1989, the Liberal government did the same song and dance to try to avoid the word "tax"; that time, they called it a levy. In 1989, the Peterson government brought in the tire tax levy, and it stayed in place until 1993. Then, if you can believe

this, under the NDP government, Bob Rae cancelled-
Hon. John Gerretsen: Their Bob Rae.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Yes, he was an NDP member at that time. Bob cancelled the tire tax. Understand the concept of this: This is an NDPer that cancels a tax. The NDP have never met a tax they didn't love, and here they are, cancelling the tire tax. So you know, without a doubt, how insane this tax must be when even the NDP would cancel such a tax.

In 2005, the same games began to be played. The Liberal Party was establishing a long tradition of manipulating words. In 2005, it became such a hot potato that they withdrew the tax before it was implemented. This proposed tax is also another broken promise from the Liberal government. This time, the promise only lasted a few days from the last budget. Despite the fact that they're trying to sneak it in under the guise of a fee or a levy or a duty, it's still a tax.

Improved tire recycling is indeed a desirable thing for Ontario. A tax burden for consumers is not. The government should have consulted with the industry, an industry that is more than ready to talk about recycling. You should have talked to the Recycling Council of Ontario, the Ontario tire recycling association and the Ontario Tire Collectors Association. None of these people have been consulted with this year. None of these people have seen conversations from the government during this session of the Legislature. In discussing this issue with these people, other solutions could have been put forward, and those solutions could have been extremely meaningful. They may not have included a beloved tax for government revenues, but they would have been very, very effective in how they solved the problem. Especially with high public enthusiasm these days for recycling and improving recycling technologies, it is in the best interests of industry to implement profitable recycling programs, and to use and advertise products that include recycled tires or recycled rubber.

It's a matter of how to get there; it's not a matter of how big a tax you can levy against the people of Ontario. Instead of proposing an unpopular tax at a time when a recession-the R word-is looming over the Ontario economy and has indeed taken hold in our largest customer south of the border, at a time when those kinds of things are happening in our economy, imposing an unpopular tax doesn't seem to be the prudent thing to do. This government loves to talk about its prudence, yet it doesn't seem to be the prudent thing to do. We're working in a framework that should encourage new and green businesses, and we're not doing that; we're taxing the consumers of Ontario at a time when they sorely don't need that tax.

One of my friends here will talk about the tire tax as a safety issue. The more expensive tires are, the more you

try to get another few miles out of them, the more bald tires there are on the highways. At least once a week-it seems nightly-I see Sergeant Cam Woolley on the TV news talking about car safety: You should wear seat belts, you should have a safe car, and you should have good tires on that safe car. That's the only thing that touches the road, between you and eternity. So you should have good tires, and this bill will not be encouraging that.

There are a number of industry-led associations, which I have talked about. They are more than willing to consult with the government. Many of them have not been consulted with during this session, and they were very surprised when this came in. You would think that the government would look at the lessons of history that have been taught about the tire tax. In 1989, it was withdrawn. In 2005, the public outrage was so great that it was aborted. This government is apparently refusing to listen to the stories of history.

If the government truly believes that it wants to implement a tire recycling program, what it would do is consult with the manufacturers, consult with the first importers and, through regulation, have the importers and the manufacturers take responsibility for the disposal of tires through a transparent system. If there are costs involved, those two, the manufacturers and the first importers, should be the ones who move the products through the system and create a transparent system that pays its way through the system.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: "There will be no tire tax." Did everyone get that? "There will be no tire tax." Mr. McGuinty, June 3, 2005. The minister says the discussions with the industry are starting, but he's already got the number out there: \$4, \$5, \$6-maybe it's going to be \$10 or maybe it's going to be \$12. The number is already out there. They can't wait to get their hands on that tax. If this debate this morning turns the corner on that desire from this government to feather their nests and get that \$5, \$10 or \$15 tax into the general coffers-

Hon. John Gerretsen: Oh, now it's going up. I see.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Oh, it's going up like a skyrocket. When you start measuring the dollars it's going to attract, I'll be amazed if your government can hold itself back from reaching out for that money. Basically, we don't have a plan yet, but the money is out there, the \$5, the \$4, the \$6, the \$10.

We've heard a lot of very good ideas this morning. The solution to this problem is to work with the industry, to work with the manufacturers. Before you put the tax on tires, you should work with these people, first importers and manufacturers, and come up with a transparent system that will allow the industry to solve the problem. You don't need a tax to do that. You don't need a fee to

do that. You don't need a levy to do that. You don't need anything out of the taxpayers' pockets to do that. All you need is some well-thought-out and co-operative standards for the use of the industry when they come to implement government regulations. The only thing you really need is regulations, along with industry cooperation, and you're only going to get that through discussions.

April 10th, 2008 – Private Member's Business (Debate on an Act to Recognize Norwuz, the Iranian New Year)

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Just briefly, one of the great privileges as an MPP is to learn about traditions like this from around the world, other cultures which you may not otherwise learn about. It's interesting that we have the opportunity in Ontario to weave them into our traditions and, by doing so, create a very inclusive society. We're reading petitions almost every day about the removal of the Lord's Prayer from this place, which ignores the tradition of this place and creates an exclusive society. In this case, with this motion, we are creating an inclusive society which weaves into our own strong traditions.

There's an interesting fact that I came across the other day. The diversity that Ontario has, with the number of people and the number of different countries that are represented and the volume of those people who are represented in the GTA, and indeed Ontario and Canada-particularly in the GTA and Toronto, that diversity is greater than any other city in the world. The only other city that even comes close-it does not surpass it-was New York City in the 1910 era, when they had the same kind of diversity that we have today. I must say that the atmosphere, the openness and the inclusiveness of our society in Toronto far exceeds that of New York City or, indeed, any other city you would like to compare it to around the world. I'm very proud of our tradition in that area.

April 17th, 2008 – Question Period

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Today, it was announced that hundreds more Ontario workers will soon become unemployed. At GM in Oshawa, 1,000 more workers have been handed pink slips; in Cambridge, at the Closetmaid plant, 500 will soon be wondering how to feed their families; and the list goes on and on.

There are economic forces at work in Ontario that employers and employees cannot control, and so they look to their government for help and guidance. But instead of reacting accordingly, the Premier stubbornly stands by his policies of patchwork patronage and partisanship. Manufacturers are worried, unions are worried, investors

are worried-everyone but this government seems to be worried. Acting Premier, without blaming anyone or anything else, why are you so lackadaisically allowing Ontario to become a have-not province?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It must be nice to be so blissfully unaware. The Premier would rather defend his own failing promises than admit his mistakes and begin the long, hard, arduous journey to healing our economy. Handouts and welfare for giant corporations here and there will not help the 82% of Ontario workers who are employed by small and medium-sized businesses. Excessive taxes will not bring in revenues for public services when all the businesses have left town. Perhaps the Premier thinks that he doesn't need to reach out to the little guy during non-election years, but he'll be sorry when his legacy is tainted by economic failure. Premier, will you do the right thing now and save Ontario from the McGuinty recession?

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