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Throne speech promises little

On March 8, MPPs listened to the Liberals' Speech from the Throne. This one was mostly a repackaging of broken promises and old news.

Called the "Open Ontario Plan," it is actually a signal that, as long as the McGuinty government remains in office, our province will remain closed to jobs, investment, and a better future.

Ontario is falling behind the rest of Canada. We have the worst debt, worst deficit and worst red-tape burden. Ontario lost the most jobs during the recession and has produced among the fewest new private-sector jobs in the country.

This throne speech promises little to reverse these trends.

The government has yet to announce, for example, a comprehensive plan to bring back the hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs lost over the last few years.

Barely acknowledged in the speech is Ontario's nearly \$25-billion deficit—perhaps our single greatest, and most immediate, challenge.

Tourism was forgotten, and agriculture merited only four lines in a 16-page speech.

But it is also true that this government has shown a consistent pattern of making throne speech commitments that are soon ignored. For example, they promised to create high-paying jobs, but lost 140,000 last year alone.

They promised to restrain spending; to reduce red tape and consultants; to close the coal-fired generating plants by 2009;

Ted Arnott



to hire 9,000 nurses; and to build 35,000 long-term care beds. None of these promises were kept.

The government's 2007 Throne Speech made no mention of the Harmonized Sales Tax, or HST. Yet, this has been the most significant decision the government has made since the 2007 election. When the HST comes into effect on Canada Day, it will create new hardship for many families, seniors, and businesses.

What other surprises, I wonder, might be in store in the months ahead?

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My annual report to you, the residents of Wellington-Halton Hills, will soon be in your mailboxes. Again this year, we have included a survey. I hope you will take the time to fill it out and send it back to me, so I can have the benefit of your advice.

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Thank you to everyone who joined my wife and I for our second annual Free Family Skate Jan. 31. More 270 people laced up their skates at the Acton arena.

—Ted Arnott is the MPP for Wellington-Halton Hills

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