

No time for election, MP says

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Seniors are also a hot-button issue for the NDP, who are once again backing Janice Hagan in Oak Ridges-Markham.

"A lot of seniors are teetering on the poverty line," said Geoff Krauter, Oak Ridges-Markham NDP riding association president.

Prior to the release of the budget, the NDP was being noted as the swing-vote party. Yesterday, NDP leader Jack Layton said his party would not support the budget.

'SENIORS ON POVERTY LINE'

"A lot of the demands the NDP put forward were reasonable. ... It's particularly telling the government made no indication they're strengthening the CPP and they did not provide adequate funding for the GIS (guaranteed income supplement)," Mr. Krauter said.

The NDP were not the only ones expected to thumb their noses at the budget. So, too, were the Liberals and Bloc Quebecois. But that is not what is expected to take down the government.

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"It's the first time in history a prime minister, (Stephen) Harper, has been found guilty of contempt. He should be given an award," Mr. Temelkovski said with more than a hint of sarcasm. "He can't be trusted."

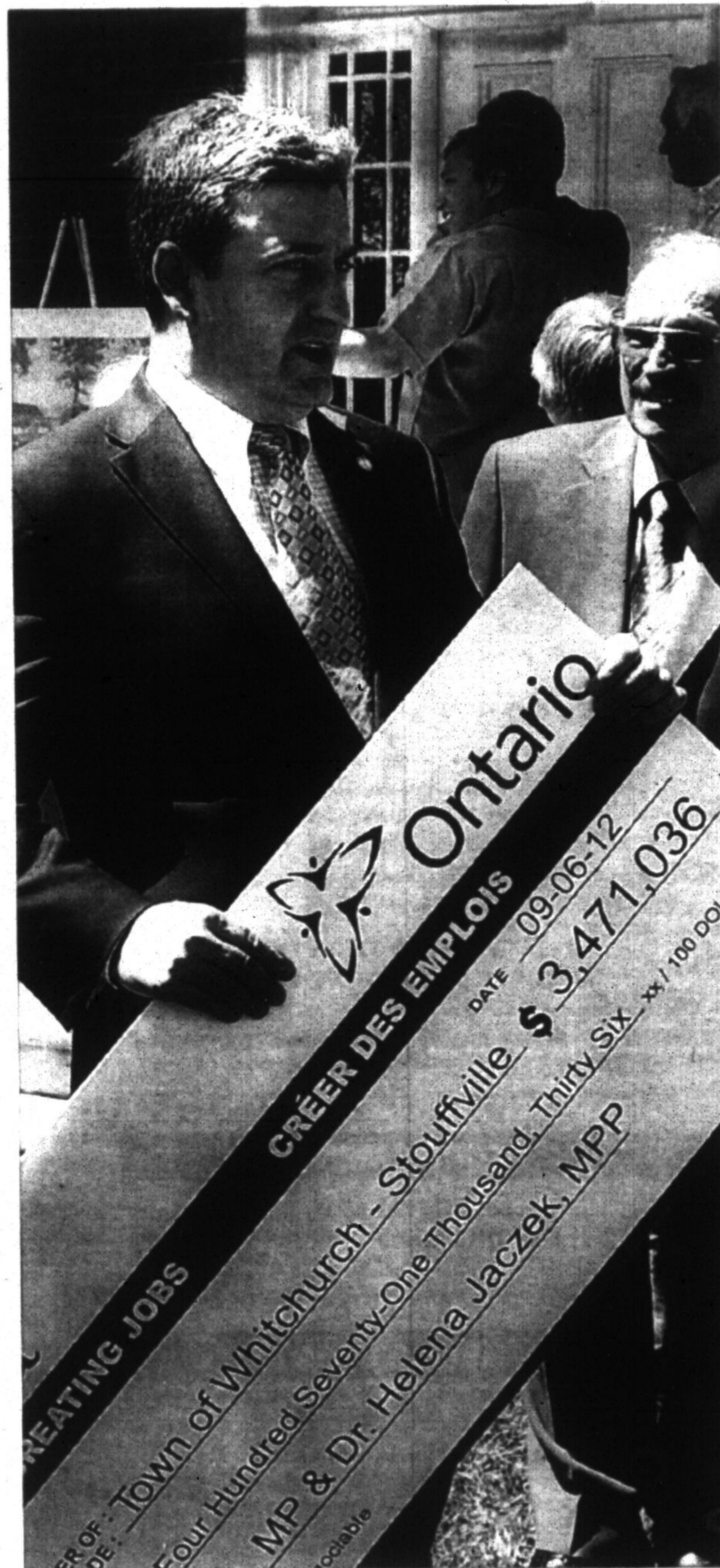
Mr. Calandra, who did not reference the potential non-confidence on ethical issue vote expected to take place tomorrow in his press release, however, did say: "This isn't the time for an unnecessary election. We need to stay the course to help create jobs and economic growth."

Mr. Calandra lives in Stouffville.

Trifon Haitas of Richmond Hill is the Oak Ridges-Markham candidate for the Green Party.

If the federal government falls, an election is expected to take place in May.

POLITICS



SUN TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Oak Ridges-Markham MP Paul Calandra delivers a cheque to the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum in 2009. The Stouffville resident could be back on the campaign trail soon if the Conservatives are toppled.

Popular programs appear lost with federal budget

BY CHRIS TRABER
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Two programs, potentially popular with Canadians, could be shelved along with the rest of what appears to be a short-lived federal budget.

Cancelled twice, reinstated, bankrupted and re-branded since its launch in 1997 the ecoEnergy program was reintroduced in today's federal budget, as was a children's arts tax credit.

Instead, you will likely be heading to the polls for another federal vote.

Windfall Ecology Centre executive director Brent Kopperson called the ecoEnergy program Canada's most important climate change mitigation program.

He was pleased to hear Ottawa pledge \$400-million for the program that distributed grants of up to \$5,000 to homeowners for energy-saving improvements, such as added insulation or a high-efficiency furnace.

"It has proven itself to be very effective in creating jobs and keeping money circulating in our communities."

'They did it for fitness and now arts and culture is just as important.'

But the program will be on hold after the three opposition parties rejected the federal Conservative's budget Tuesday, which could lead to the fall of the government by the end of the week.

Tuesday's budget included \$2.3 billion in new government spending, including a one-year extension of the former EnerGuide For Homes programs, aimed at giving homeowners a break.

EcoEnergy was launched as a four-year incentive program in April 2007, but it was to end later this month. The government stopped accepting bookings for retro-fit evaluations a year ago after demand tripled and it became too expensive to maintain.

More than 700,000 Canadian homeowners participated in the program. The average federal grant paid to each household was \$1,371. The program produced energy savings of 21 per cent use and reduced 3.14 tonnes of greenhouse gases per household.

Meanwhile, the children's arts tax credit, also in Tuesday's federal budget, finally levels the playing field between culture and athletics, York Region Arts Council chairperson Judi McIntyre said.

Similar to the youth fitness tax incentive, a non-refundable tax credit of up to \$75 based on eligible fitness expenses to a maximum of \$500 for each child under 16, the arts credit promotes savings and encourages arts enrollment.

"It's fabulous, really good," Ms McIntyre said. "I think they're finally getting how arts and culture fits into quality of life. They did it for fitness and now arts and culture is just as important."

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