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Member's Statement

February 21, 2005

Mr. Speaker:

Yesterday marked the beginning of the Annual Rural Ontario Municipal Association and the Ontario Good Roads Association Conference. I want to welcome all municipal officials here for their meetings this week.

The message I've been hearing from municipal leaders is simply this: that the McGuinty Liberals have turned their backs on rural Ontario. The Government promised action, yet has delivered nothing to resolve municipal concerns with regard to the Community Re-Investment Fund.

The Government promised that farmers would be a priority for them. Yet, while the Premier has \$400,000,000 for the Papatello Palace Casino, calling it an investment, they have no money to invest in agriculture to ensure that Ontarians have an adequate food supply. Sandra and Dwight get a cheque, while farmers get “the cheque’s in the mail.”

Speaker, there are two visits planned to Queen’s Park in March: the first on March 2nd organized by members of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and another on March 9th organized by private landowners from across Ontario.

Let me assure you, they are not coming to tell Mr. McGuinty that they’re happy with his Liberal Government. Quite to the contrary, they see this Government as being both disinterested and unresponsive to the needs of rural Ontarians.

Over the next few days, Ministers will hear plenty from our municipal leaders about rural issues. I would suggest to those Ministers that they pay close attention, because rural people are paying very close attention to them.