

**STATEMENT BY THE
HONOURABLE MIKE HARRIS
PREMIER OF ONTARIO**

July 21, 1995

 Ontario

As I travelled this province over the past several months, Ontarians have told me what they know in their hearts to be true:

This province has been on the wrong track and it's time to do something about it.

That concern was confirmed to us after the election, when Cabinet was given its first briefing on the state of the province's finances. This morning, we want to share that information with you.

The fiscal situation is not good. In fact, it is critical.

As you will soon hear from the Minister of Finance, the previous government left Ontario in far worse shape than their April economic statement indicated.

We have learned that revenue projections in the NDP's April economic statement were inflated. Spending is far higher than what the former government published, and poorly accounted for.

The combined effect of exaggerated revenue figures and uncontrolled expenditures means that, instead of reducing the deficit — as they said they had done — the former government has actually left Ontarians facing a deficit larger than last year's.

The easy thing for a new government such as mine to do is to point to the mess we've inherited, to spend all our time for the first year pointing fingers and laying blame.

What I want to do today is underscore that we got the message on June the 8th. The people of this province didn't send us here to wring our hands.

They told us the status quo is unacceptable.

Unacceptable to working men and women who struggle to make ends meet, while government squanders their hard-earned tax dollars.

Unacceptable to parents concerned about hope and opportunity for their children's future.

Unacceptable to my government.

Left unchecked, the irresponsible spending of both of our predecessors

undermines the financial stability of this province.

Voters elected us to change the status quo, to put our problems behind us and get Ontario moving again. We asked for that job, we were given and we accept that responsibility.

In a few moments, my colleague the Minister of Finance will detail the steps we are taking to put things right for the remaining eight months of this fiscal year.

Some of these measures may not be welcomed by the special interests, but all will be understood by Ontario's taxpayers who recognise that government is living beyond its means.

None of our decisions are easy or taken lightly. But, working together, and drawing on the strengths of this province, Ontario can and will live up to its potential — can and will build a better and a brighter future.

Getting our finances in order is not an end in itself — only the start of the process of re-igniting our economy and restoring opportunity and hope to our province.

We Ontarians are in this together. We must all share in the sacrifices if we are to share in the gains achieved by getting Ontario back on track.

We must do what is difficult, but what is clearly right to do.

Right to do in order to restore confidence in our economy and create jobs.

Right to do in order to restore hope for those who are unemployed or on welfare.

Right to do in order to provide opportunity for our children.

Right to do in order to create the future we all want and restore the pride in our province.

To give the details of today's announcement — the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Ernie Eves.