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(Hansard)**

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(Hansard)**

Wednesday 5 December 2007

Mercredi 5 décembre 2007

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 5 December 2007

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 5 décembre 2007

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CHICKEN INDUSTRY

Mr. Toby Barrett: The chicken farmers of Ontario are with us here today to share some prime poultry and inform us on some issues. They're having a reception tonight at 5 o'clock. Come on out, have some wings and learn a bit about our farmers and what they produce.

The broiler growers have long ensured both the safety and the quality of our local chicken industry, while also negotiating prices to be paid to all Ontario chicken farmers by all Ontario processors. For Ontario's 1,100 broiler producers, trade issues have not gone, and will not go, away. Canada needs to be able to negotiate a reasonable, sensitive product category at the WTO, one which will give us enough room to include all supply-managed products while maintaining current over-quota tariffs and preventing any increase in quota access.

Interprovincial marketing of chicken is also creating challenges. Broiler production remains an ever-changing industry, one in which the growing retail monopolies pose increasing marketing challenges.

As MPPs, we must all continue the job of helping others to understand the economic benefits of supply management. I say thus: We used to raise broilers before supply management and we paid the price. The three-legged stool of supply management sustains farm country: effective import controls, production controls and the ability to set the price.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: Today, I want to speak about a project set to transform my riding of Hamilton Mountain, a project that is the result of the government's commitment to health care and to the people of Hamilton. Right now, the Henderson hospital is about to begin phase one of its redevelopment plan that will see the face of health care change, not only in Hamilton, but throughout the Golden Horseshoe and across the province.

The Henderson began as the Mount Hamilton Hospital in 1917 and served the veterans of the First World War. In 1954, the Henderson opened as a 322-bed hospital serving chronic and convalescent patients.

Over the next four years, nearly three quarters of the existing hospital will be redeveloped into a state-of-the-art facility. Construction will upgrade and expand inpatient and outpatient services to provide acute care support for the Juravinski Cancer Centre, the joint replacement program and general hospital services. In doing so, we will offer better service, more beds and a shorter waiting time.

Our government is committed to health care and to infrastructure investment. This project is only one in a list of many that demonstrates the government's commitment to modernize and expand health care infrastructure and improve access to quality health care. I am proud to be part of a government who has made health care one of its top priorities.

VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations to you on your recent election.

Today is International Volunteer Day, and each year it is recognized by the United Nations as a day on which volunteers around the world are celebrated. We set aside December 5 to recognize and show appreciation for the millions of people who donate their time, energy and talents to their communities.

I am constantly amazed by the willingness of people to work on behalf of others without the expectation of pay or other tangible gain. Every year, millions of Canadian volunteers contribute one billion hours to provide society with \$13 billion worth of unpaid community service through programs like Girl Guides, Meals on Wheels, Lions clubs and much more.

The contributions of Canadian volunteers open the doors to a better world for all, socially and economically. More and more Canadians are rolling up their sleeves and getting to work to promote a cause they believe in, help a neighbour in need or support the efforts of local youth groups.

Right now I'd like to recognize Timmy Shin and his mother, Minja Shin, who are in the gallery with us. Timmy speaks English, French and Korean. He's 13 years old and has applied for the page program next season—you want to talk about volunteerism at an early age.

To Timmy and to the volunteers in Thornhill and across Ontario, let me say thank you for helping to make Ontario a better place in which to work, live and raise a family.

RIDING OF PICKERING— SCARBOROUGH EAST

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: This is the first opportunity I've had to be on the record since we came back. I want to extend to you congratulations on your election, Speaker. I'm sure you will live up to everything that you might anticipate, and then some.

It really is a pleasure to rise today and share with my colleagues a little bit about my new riding, in effect, of Pickering—Scarborough East. One third of these constituents are new to me—new faces, new individuals—and I look forward to the opportunity to serve them during the next four years.

It's the only riding that bridges Toronto and one of the 905 municipalities, in Scarborough East and in Pickering. But there are common interests shared by both these communities. Certainly the Rouge Valley Health System is but one of these, where increased funding during the past four years has driven down the wait times, where there's the development of a new birthing centre at the Centenary site and the start of redevelopment at the Ajax and Pickering site.

The riding also incorporates the fabulous Rouge Park, extending in this part of the riding from Sheppard Avenue down to Lake Ontario and is part of a linkage to the greenbelt, which we worked so hard to put in place.

The communities in the riding share similar concerns for safety in their communities, for seniors and for children.

But in particular I want to thank the constituents of the riding for the way I was received and my volunteers were received, both at the door and on the phones throughout the campaign. It really was a pleasure having a chance to meet new constituents and reconnect with those we may not have talked to recently. I want to thank the volunteers who worked so tirelessly throughout the campaign to ensure that we had electoral success.

TERASA HILL

Mr. John O'Toole: I rise today to bring to the attention of this House the success of one of my constituents, Terasa Hill, cancer survivor and inventor of Barnies Horse Treats.

Terasa was featured on the CBC reality TV show, *Dragons' Den*, where she convinced the panel of financial experts that her idea is worth their investment of \$300,000.

Terasa demonstrates her courage while battling cancer, and at the same time her entrepreneurial spirit, like so many other Durham constituents Terasa purchased an injured racehorse named Sierra as a riding horse and family pet. In nursing the retired racehorse back to health, Terasa developed a nutritious snack of molasses and grain that she named Barnies Horse Treats. The horse treat proved to be so successful that it is distributed in 144 stores across Canada and earned Terasa a place on *Dragons' Den*.

I'd like to pay tribute to Terasa, the creator of Barnies treats, for her success. We all wish her well in all she does in life. Congratulations. Along with Terasa Hill, I commend all the hard-working entrepreneurs of my riding who slay dragons every day, despite the McGuinty government's "Don't worry, be happy" attitude.

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AFFAIRES FRANCOPHONES

M. Gilles Bisson: Je veux relancer la demande à cette Assemblée aujourd'hui pour la création d'un ministère des Affaires francophones. Comme on le sait, les francophones en Ontario jouent un rôle important, non seulement dans la culture de la province, mais aussi dans l'économie et l'épanouissement de nos communautés. Ça fait longtemps que les francophones cherchent une place où ils peuvent amener leurs demandes quand ça vient aux projets qui vont non seulement soutenir leurs communautés, mais aussi augmenter leur présence et augmenter l'habileté des francophones de se trouver dans la communauté ontarienne d'une manière plus importante.

Pendant les années passées, ce qu'on a vu, c'est qu'on a retiré les fonds nécessaires pour soutenir la communauté francophone jusqu'à un certain point. On s'est trouvé à essayer de préserver nos services. On a travaillé très fort pour leur préservation. C'est le temps qu'on commence à les promouvoir. On a besoin d'un ministère des Affaires francophones qui sera là pour coordonner tous les efforts de la part du gouvernement provincial envers l'épanouissement des services pour la communauté francophone. Dans une communauté, soit Welland, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Timmins, Hearst ou n'importe quelle autre, qu'on puisse aller à une place où le financement est en place pour faire la coordination des services entre les différents ministères. C'est important non seulement pour la province de l'Ontario, mais c'est même plus important pour l'épanouissement de notre communauté.

MAXWELL CLARKE

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'm honoured to be able to speak to this House today about the late Brigadier-General Maxwell Clarke, a great Canadian and outstanding Peterborough resident.

General Clarke was born on September 3, 1912, in Peterborough. At the age of 15, General Clarke joined the militia in the Peterborough Rangers as a private soldier. With the advent of the Second World War, General Clarke mobilized for war service with the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders. With this division, he headed off to England. From there, he held various staff appointments until going to Italy in 1943 with the Fifth Canadian Armoured Division. He finished the war at headquarters, the First Canadian Army, in Holland at Apeldoorn.

After the war, he commanded the 50th Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery and commanded the 13th Militia group, the largest peacetime

grouping of reserve soldiers in Canadian history. He was an aide to two Governors General: Vanier and Michener. General Clarke continued his involvement with the armed forces as a member of the Regimental Senate of the Hastings and Prince Edward Regiment until his recent death.

Locally, Maxwell Clarke was involved with the United Way, as well as being president of the Industrial Accident Prevention Association of Peterborough. In 1928, he found employment with Quaker Oats in the mail room and retired in 1977 as vice-president and operations manager for Canada. General Clarke is survived by his wife, Madeline, his three children, Arthur, Maxine and Henry, and seven grandchildren. Maxwell Clarke: a great Canadian who was proud to call Peterborough his home.

GREENHOUSE INDUSTRY

Mr. Bruce Crozier: Mr. Speaker, I want to as well congratulate you on your two elections—the general election and that of Speaker—and to advise you and all the members present that the Ontario Greenhouse Alliance is joining us today in the members' gallery. The Ontario greenhouse industry has a present investment of over \$2 billion in structures, not including warehousing, packing houses and associated business. At the current rate of expansion, the industry is targeting a further investment in rural Ontario, some \$20 million per annum.

In the spring and summer of 2001, the Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, Flowers Canada (Ontario) and Ontario Pepper Growers, with the support of Agri-Food and Agriculture Canada, commissioned the Ontario greenhouse industry to issue a resolution study. The result of this has been TOGA and its invention and work within the greenhouse industry in Ontario.

What they're here for today, more particularly, is to bring to us a little Christmas cheer, in the form of some beautiful poinsettias. So I encourage all members to pick up their little ticket for their poinsettias, to join TOGA in the legislative dining room and start the Christmas season in a beautiful way with their help.

CHICKEN INDUSTRY

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: Thank you, Speaker. I also want to add my congratulations on your election.

Today is Chicken Day at Queen's Park. Farmers started early this morning, meeting with MPPs and putting a face on the producers who generate \$491.5 million of annual economic activity here in Ontario.

My husband and I are among the 1,100 chicken farmers in Ontario who produce more than 321 million kilos of chicken meat every year. That represents almost one third of the total amount of chicken produced in Canada. This Ontario-grown chicken is distributed for home consumption, fast food establishments, restaurants, hotels and, yes, here in our own dining room. Chicken farmers are a part of the supply management system of marketing, which enables them to receive a fair price from the marketplace.

The Chicken Farmers of Ontario have made a Queen's Park tradition of their beer-and-wings reception, which takes place here in committee room 2 at 5 o'clock tonight. But as the member for Essex has stated, I also encourage you to go and meet with the greenhouse growers, who have turned the production of vegetables and flowers into a year-round opportunity for consumers to buy Ontario, buy local. Then head on down for the chicken farmers' beer-and-wings reception. All in all, it's a great opportunity to meet with some of Ontario's hardest-working farmers and come away with some of the good things that grow in Ontario.

VISITORS

Mr. Michael Prue: This is not a point of order, by the way, just for the edification of those others who stand up on a point of order. I merely wish to indicate to the House that the Musing family are here. They are here to see their daughter Marisa, who is one of the pages, and I would like to introduce them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, and welcome to Queen's Park.

VISITORS

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to ask members to join me in welcoming my constituents Lori and James Hearsom, who are in the west members' gallery. They are from Newmarket, and we've had a good opportunity to share with them how we do business here. They're looking forward to how well-behaved the members of the government are going to be during question period today.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Welcome to Queen's Park. I trust the honourable member means the opposition side as well.

VISITORS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I would also like to take an opportunity to introduce Donna Dillman and Marilyn Crawford, who are here today on the issue of uranium mining in eastern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Welcome.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HEALTHY FOOD FOR HEALTHY SCHOOLS ACT, 2007

LOI DE 2007 PORTANT SUR UNE ALIMENTATION SAINTE POUR DES ÉCOLES SAINES

Ms. Wynne moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 8, An Act to amend the Education Act / Projet de loi 8, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The minister for a short statement.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to defer my statement to ministerial statements.

1350

MOTOR VEHICLE ORIGIN
AND COMPONENTS
DISCLOSURE ACT, 2007

LOI DE 2007 SUR LA DIVULGATION
DE RENSEIGNEMENTS CONCERNANT
L'ORIGINE ET LES PIÈCES DE VÉHICULES
AUTOMOBILES

Mr. Ouellette moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 9, An Act to require the disclosure of the country of origin and the components of motor vehicles sold in Ontario / Projet de loi 9, Loi exigeant la divulgation du pays d'origine et de la liste des pièces des véhicules automobiles vendus en Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: The auto sector in Ontario and across Canada is being significantly impacted. What this will do is those individuals wishing to purchase a vehicle will know exactly where the components or where the majority of the manufacture of that specific vehicle is made so that when they are making a decision on which country or workers they want to support, that decision is made at the point of purchase.

LORI DUPONT ACT (DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE PROTECTION), 2007
LOI LORI DUPONT DE 2007
SUR LA PROTECTION CONTRE
LA VIOLENCE FAMILIALE

Mr. O'Toole moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act, in memory of Lori Dupont, to better protect victims of domestic violence / Projet de loi 10, Loi, à la mémoire de Lori Dupont, visant à mieux protéger les victimes de violence familiale.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for a short statement.

Mr. John O'Toole: Over the last few years, I have been very disappointed that the Domestic Violence Prevention Act of 2001, Bill 117, has not been

proclaimed. This act will encourage the government to move forward with that, but it will also allow the justice of the peace to initiate domestic violence intervention orders obtained through the family court if a JP is convinced by the rules of evidence that such action should take place. It provides 24/7 access to justice by the respondent as well.

Thanks to those who have worked on it from the Dupont family; detective Cathy Bawden and Jacki McKinnon, who have worked on the DRIVEN project in Durham; and Paul Hong, a young volunteer lawyer who reviewed the Domestic Violence Prevention Act and made amendments, along with Vanessa Yolles, legislative counsel.

MOTIONS

APPOINTMENT OF HOUSE OFFICERS

Hon. Michael Bryant: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forth a motion without notice regarding presiding officers of the assembly.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour? Agreed.

Hon. Michael Bryant: I move that Bruce Crozier, member for the electoral district of Essex, be appointed Deputy Speaker and Chair of the committee of the whole House; Ted Arnott, member for the electoral district of Wellington-Halton Hills, be appointed First Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House; Jim Wilson, member for the electoral district of Simcoe-Grey, be appointed Second Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House; and that notwithstanding any standing order, Andrea Horwath, member for the electoral district of Hamilton Centre, be appointed Third Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House and that she be entitled to exercise the powers and duties of office as set out in standing order 4(c).

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just want to welcome my new colleagues who will be assisting me in the chair and look forward to working with you. We will get together very soon to set up a schedule that I know will work out for all of us. Congratulations to all.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

HEALTHY SCHOOLS
ÉCOLES SAINES

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This government takes the health of our students very seriously. Within our schools we want to encourage the healthier foods and beverages

and more active lifestyles that students need to be successful.

Cela inclut, faire en sorte que les cafétérias scolaires offrent des produits plus sains.

That's why I am pleased to rise in the House today to introduce the proposed Healthy Food for Healthy Schools Act, 2007, that would, if passed, drop trans fats from food and beverages sold in school cafeterias.

Getting rid of trans fats in our schools and providing students with healthier foods can help reduce rates of child obesity and help improve students' readiness to learn. In fact, the Trans Fat Task Force, reporting to the Federal Minister of Health in June 2006, wrote that studies show that trans fat increases blood levels of LDL, or the bad cholesterol, and decreases blood levels of HDL, the good cholesterol, effects which are associated with increased coronary heart disease.

In 2004, the Canadian Community Health Survey, conducted by Statistics Canada, found that 28% of Ontarians aged two to 17 were either overweight or obese. This is unacceptable. We know that kids with unhealthy weights are more likely to develop diseases like type 2 diabetes.

If the bill is passed, dairy products or meat products like beef or lamb that contain small amounts of trans fats would be exempted. Those are the naturally occurring trans fats. Special-event days such as pizza day would also be exempted. But we are encouraging schools to select healthier options for those special days.

The legislation would also remove unhealthy foods and beverages from all school vending machines. This builds upon the very successful voluntary ban on junk food in elementary schools that we introduced in 2004. We will also begin to establish comprehensive nutrition standards for school cafeterias, vending machines, tuck shops and canteens and other daily school food services.

Les jeunes passent une bonne partie de leur temps à l'école. Il est important d'offrir ces options santé afin de les encourager à acquérir des habitudes saines.

Yesterday I was at Bayview Middle School, a school in Toronto that, along with other schools in the board and other schools around the province, has already begun reducing trans fats from the food sold in its cafeteria. I want to applaud them for those efforts.

I am proud to tell you that if this proposed legislation passes, Ontario would be among the first provinces in Canada to drop trans fats in school cafeterias. I am pleased that we're acting so quickly on the two commitments we made to drop trans fats in school cafeterias and to prescribe a healthier menu in schools.

La loi proposée renforcerait notre stratégie générale pour des écoles plus saines, qui comprend the Healthy Schools recognition program, 20 minutes of daily physical activity in elementary schools and the northern fruit and vegetable pilot program.

We know that encouraging students to make these healthy choices now will help them reach their full potential and develop important healthy habits into adulthood.

I want to just acknowledge three people who have joined us today to support this initiative: Mr. Rocco Rossi, CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario; Sharon Brodovsky, senior manager of Healthy Weights Initiative; and Krista Orendorff, the government relations coordinator.

VOLUNTEERS

Hon. Michael Chan: Today, December 5, is International Volunteer Day. The United Nations General Assembly created this special day in 1985. The goal is to highlight volunteer contributions and to encourage volunteerism.

1400

Five million people in Ontario volunteer their time in 45,000 organizations. That's a great reflection of the commitment of Ontarians to their communities and their neighbours. Ontario is fortunate to have this high level of civic engagement. We cannot, however, rely on luck. We need to recognize the contributions of our volunteers and find ways to include newcomers to Ontario in voluntary action.

At the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, we recognize Ontario's volunteers through a number of programs. This includes the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Awards for Voluntarism. Last year, more than 8,000 Ontarians were recognized through the Volunteer Service Awards. They wear their trillium pins proudly. I know many of my colleagues in this House took part in the 45 ceremonies that were held across the province, and I encourage you to do so again next year.

I am truly glad to say that the volunteer spirit prospers among Ontario youth. Young people account for 18% of all volunteering hours in our province. Young people in Ontario, 15 to 24 years of age, volunteer at the rate of 63%. That is 8% higher than the national average among citizens of all ages. At 63%, Ontario's rate of volunteering among 15- to 24-year-olds is the highest in Canada. They bring fresh ideas and energy to the organizations they serve.

Our government is now looking at ways to help volunteer organizations tap into newcomer skills and experience. Each year, about 130,000 immigrants arrive in this province. When they volunteer, they help organizations reach out to a greater range of people. And volunteering helps newcomers adapt to life in Ontario. This is a win-win situation.

We are also working with the voluntary sector to better deliver services to their communities.

I ask my fellow members to join me in saluting Ontario's volunteers on International Volunteer Day. They generously give of their self and time. They are part of a rich tradition in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Mr. Frank Klees: On behalf of the PC caucus, I want to express our support for the minister's announcement

today. We and all Ontarians support opportunities for students to live more healthy lifestyles, for more healthy exercise and nutritious food in our schools to fight rising obesity rates and the health problems that are associated with them.

Type 2 diabetes, once virtually unrecognized in adolescents, now accounts for half of all new diagnoses of diabetes in a number of populations. This has been almost entirely attributed to pediatric obesity. Some 85% of affected children diagnosed with diabetes are overweight at diagnosis. A rise in obesity and decrease in physical activity in young people contribute to insulin resistance and are significant risk factors in the development of diabetes.

According to data collected in 2000, 25% of boys and 14% of girls between the ages of 12 and 18 in Ontario were above a healthy weight. Schools can, and in fact should, provide an environment that encourages healthy eating and also regular physical activity, while assisting students to develop the knowledge and the skills to make their own healthy lifestyle choices.

According to recent data released this year by the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, the issue of physical activity in Canada is a larger public health concern than ever previously believed. Ninety-one per cent of Ontario's children are not meeting the guidelines recommended by Canada's Physical Activity Guides for Children and Youth, which state that children should be accumulating 90 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity, in addition to their incidental activities required for daily living.

We are making some progress in this province, but I would suggest that today's announcement, while good and while we support it, should be coupled by this government with the necessary resources and funding to ensure that not only do we have a legislative pronouncement to remove certain foods, but that there are also the resources within our schools to provide the necessary guidance to those teachers in terms of being able to deliver the information that's necessary for students to have, that there is in fact the necessary resource within the school system to provide the necessary physical activity that is required. We have far too many schools in this province that still do not have the appropriate facilities, whether they be gymnasium facilities or otherwise. Many are in disrepair.

We would call on the minister to couple her announcement today with a further follow-up announcement to schools across the province to ensure, on the one hand, that teachers are appropriately resourced, that schools have the appropriate funding to ensure that these programs are implemented and to ensure as well that the physical structures of our schools are such that they can accommodate the appropriate type of physical activity that is necessary.

Once again on behalf of the PC caucus, I commend the minister for bringing this forward. We look forward to the discussion around this and the education that will take place, not only for students but also for their parents,

so that all of us recognize the importance of healthy living and healthy choices in our day-to-day lives.

VOLUNTEERS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I want to respond to the comments of the minister with regard to volunteers. There's no question that volunteers do valuable work in our society. They contribute greatly. We honour them and we in fact are indebted to them. But there's a dark side to the reality of volunteerism in this province, and that is that too often services which are valuable to this society have been cut by governments, the federal and provincial levels—and even the municipal levels, given the down-loading—and that burden has been put on volunteers who should not be carrying that burden. Those services are crucial. Those services have to be provided properly, funded properly and not carried on the backs of volunteers.

When food banks started, there was a general recognition that this was something we would only want to have to go on for a short time, but now they've become a necessary part of life. The volunteers who work in those food banks—no question—are doing crucial work for us, but the fact that they have not been brought to the end of their lifespan, found unnecessary because now people have enough to eat, is a shame in this province.

I want to speak about newcomers as well because I have worked with newcomers who are doing volunteer work—desperate for paid work, desperate for work that reflects their credentials and training. In this province, part of the reason we have good volunteers is that we don't have the work that people need and that people deserve. This is the part of volunteerism the government should be addressing.

HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I was desperately looking to be kind to this government and to this minister.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Go ahead.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Trust me, I was, and I'm going to try, but it's just so difficult. I want to talk about the Liberal announcement syndrome, because as you know, they announce, reannounce, post-announce, pronounce and preannounce each and every time on many issues. Let me read something to you that Minister Kennedy talked about three years in relation to all this.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Who?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Minister Kennedy, ton ami. The Kingston Whig-Standard: "Ontario to Get Rid of Junk Food at Schools."

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We did.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They did, she says.

"We don't expect them to be offering junk food to kids in elementary school," Kennedy said....

"But he said he doesn't intend to give schools any extra money due to cancelled contracts."

Their own press release says, “The McGuinty government is making schools healthier places for students to learn by directing school boards to remove all junk food from vending machines in elementary schools...” And the minister is saying, “We did.”

The editorial in the Toronto Star says, “Kennedy reminded boards his government is working on a plan to boost the revenue they receive. But that is a long-term proposition and Kennedy wants the pop and chip machines out of the schools right away.”

1410

The reality is that when Rocco Rossi and I went to that school yesterday, where the minister made the announcement, the vending machine was there; the chips were still there. These machines are proliferating like rabbits across the province. Why? Because schools need money. They are offering junk food through these vending machines because they need money. Why else?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order on the government side, please.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The Speaker is going to keep you quiet very soon. Go get them, Speaker.

Why are parents raising \$560 million out of their own pocket every year? They need money. And why are vending machines still in our schools, with the same junk food they wanted to abolish three years ago? Because they need money. Schools need money, adequate dollars, so they can get rid of these vending machines that offer the junk food we desperately want to eliminate.

Yesterday the Premier said—we’re getting rid of junk food, are we?—to a question asked by a Toronto Sun journalist—“Not really; we’re not. We’re going to be consulting the manufacturers.” Rocco, didn’t he say that?

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes, he did. He said, “We are going to be”—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): You’re speaking through the Chair, please.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes, Speaker, through you.

“We’re going to be consulting the manufacturers.” What are we consulting about? Is junk food bad, yes or no? Did we do it three years ago? No. Are we doing it again? No, we’re going to be consulting manufacturers yet again.

Premier, when are we going to deal with this matter instead of saying, “The revolutionary announcement has come, but you’ve got to wait for another election before we announce it again with something more progressive”? It’s just not good enough.

VISITORS

Mr. Mario Sergio: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Visiting our House today is a wonderful delegation from the sunny island of Sicily, from the city of Trapani, and they are with us today in the west lobby. I’d like to welcome them.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Again it’s with respect to non-bank, asset-backed commercial papers, the risky roulette wheel investment scheme in which your government invested over 700 million taxpayer dollars. Yesterday you told this House, “Ontario has been investing in these papers for 15 years.” This simply isn’t true. In fact, it was only under your government that such high-risk investments were authorized.

The minister owes this House an apology for making statements in here that are contrary to the facts. I ask, will the minister make that apology now?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: No. What the previous government did do was invest it under the broad parameters of the FAA, the Financial Administration Act. We invested in 1994, 1995 and all the way through to 2004. In 2004, this government brought forward a regulation to clearly define not only that we are investing in them—because we had been for 10 years prior—but to give greater clarity to the instruments that could be used. The public accounts are clear and the records of the Ontario Financing Authority are clear. What isn’t clear is the opposition’s understanding of the process.

Again, under the broad parameters of the act the previous government purchased them. We brought greater clarity, greater transparency and greater public accountability to the precise instruments that were purchased.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: One again the minister is not being straight with the facts. The reality is that the non-bank conduits that are now frozen under the Montreal accord were initially issued into the Canadian market in January 2002, the majority of them after October 2003. So for you to stand up in this House day after day and say that these are similar to investments made 10, 12, or 15 years ago is totally inaccurate. I have the order in council dated November 4, 2007, and I’ll ask a page to take it to the minister. It’s signed by the former Minister of Finance, and maybe that’s why he’s the former minister. These are investments Moody’s wouldn’t rate; Standard and Poor’s called them “a leap of faith.” But you ignored the warnings, took the leap with somebody else’s money—the taxpayers’—and lost quite possibly over \$200 million. And then you make it worse by puffing out your chest, blowharding your way through question period—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I’d ask the member to withdraw his description of the Minister of Finance, please.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I will, under protest. I don’t think it’s a good decision.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I’d appreciate it if you would just withdraw, please.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Again, I want to repeat for members of the House and members of the public, Ontario has been buying asset-backed commercial papers since 1994. Beginning in 1998, Ontario began buying non-bank asset-backed commercial papers—1998, 1999, 2000. They did it under the broad parameters of the Financial Administration Act. In 2004, this government and my predecessor brought forward a regulation that further clarified what instruments could be used. I'd also remind members that such bodies as the Caisse de dépôt, the Alberta treasury, most of the big banks, the Ontario teachers' pension plan, the Sun-Times Media Group, and a variety of other public and private large, successful organizations have purchased these as well.

There will be a writedown; we estimate it'll be less than \$100 million. The facts are we've been buying these things—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: In reality, asset-backed commercial paper investment issued by non-banks only came into existence in 2002.

The minister himself, when he was questioned by the media, said the loss was going to be "a lot of dollars." Yesterday he said it would be around \$100 million; now he's saying it's less. Our estimates could be as high as \$220 million, a lot of money. It's the full cost of this government's promise to reduce emergency room wait times, PSA testing. Even if we take the minister at his word, it's only—that's a Liberal \$100 million; that's the full budget for this government's climate change promises, the full cost of promises to first-time homebuyers.

The minister must be aware that one of his colleagues lost his job over the slush fund that totalled \$32 million. Minister, at the very least, you owe taxpayers an apology. Will you do that today?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: There is a sum of money that may be written down, and as I pointed out yesterday to the member, the net impact on the province's statements will likely be none because of the reinvestment procedures.

But when it comes to estimates and when it comes to trusting somebody's judgment on estimates, this was the gang who said they had a balanced budget in their last budget and left a deficit of \$5.6 billion. This is the same Leader of the Opposition who was a member of a government that in fact bought these commercially backed papers from 1995 through to 2003 without clarity, without saying what the instruments were, and continued to do so.

These types of losses are hitting virtually every financial institution around. Ontario's exposure has been, relative to others, small. We all regret this, but this government will continue to manage the affairs of the province properly with growth and greater—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Again to the Minister of Finance, and returning to this potential \$200-million loss and the decision of your government to play high-stakes poker with taxpayers' money: As this minister huffed and puffed his way through question period, and he's again doing it today, he could have told this House that his government changed the law, but he didn't. This isn't the open and transparent government they promised during the election campaign. In fact, it's the same contempt for transparency they showed during slushgate, and it's why the Auditor General needs to be asked to investigate this growing scandal. Will the minister do the right thing and call in the auditor?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: It was this opposition that yesterday said that nobody had any idea of the amounts prior to this week. In fact, on August 24, CanWest News Service story, page E2; August 24, National Post, page 1 of the Financial Post; August 25, National Post, page 2; Toronto, August 25, Toronto Star business, page 1. All of them declared—and by the way, Ontario was the first; it led all the banks and all of the other organizations in terms of disclosure of what the exposure was.

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So there's been full disclosure. It goes back to August. It was well covered. The Ministry of Finance spoke publicly about it on more than a dozen occasions. The writedown will likely be less than \$100 million, and the net impact on our statements will likely be nothing. The member opposite should get his facts straight. They continually put out facts that are not entirely accurate. That's a good example of another one.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: As my colleague said, "Why are they afraid to call in the auditor?" They didn't come clean about the existence of the order in council. They did it behind closed doors. It was never made public. What we have is a government that secretly changed the laws to allow them to gamble with taxpayers' money—money they're supposed to be the trusted stewards of—and then they tried to cover it up. They call it "legislative housekeeping," but what they really mean is that they swept it under the rug. They hid their gambling habit from the public. Why? Because they were using someone else's money. In the private sector, you'd lose your job or go to jail.

The Auditor General must investigate this. The minister has the authority and the moral obligation to ask the auditor general to do so. Will he?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Public accounts can examine this; public accounts can ask the auditor to do that. I would point out that a number of private sector—the member opposite suggests people in the private sector would go to jail for this. Well, all of the big banks this quarter are taking writedowns. Let me give you some—Russel Metals, Air Canada, Toronto Pearson International Airport, Sun-Times Media Group. All have taken writedowns or are going to take writedowns in these.

These investments represented less than 10% of our cash reserves. The writeoff will be a smaller portion of

that still. The net impact will be likely zero on the province's statements. While none of us like this situation, and none of the other financial institutions that have been hit by this, this is the reality. We've managed the province's finances prudently.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I guess the minister isn't reading the financial press. How many CEOs have lost their jobs over the last year or two because of bad investments like the one you're defending here today? He comes into this House and makes statements contradicted by the facts just hours later. This is the same minister who was in charge when the Ontario cricket association got its infamous \$1-million grant in the slush fund scandal—ducking, weaving and trying to avoid his responsibility in choosing to spin the roulette wheel with taxpayers' money on investments that reputable investment bond rating agencies described as a leap of faith.

We have to wonder why he won't do right thing and ask the Auditor General to investigate. If you've got nothing to hide, why are you afraid to do it?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Again, the OFA is completely audited. These decisions are subject to public accounts review. Finally, we just need to make sure we have the facts correct. Less than 10% of our cash reserves were in here. There is a potential writedown of up to \$100 million. It will have a net zero effect on our books. Our exposure was smaller than many other comparable organizations.

The province of Ontario under the leadership of Premier McGuinty eliminated a \$5.6-billion deficit that that member and his party left the province. So if we want to talk about proper and prudent financial management, this government is delivering balanced budgets, better health care, better education and a cleaner environment, all in the context of balanced budgets and prudent fiscal management.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Premier. My question is this: What does the Premier have to say to the family of Harnek Singh Sidhu, who died after waiting 12 hours in the emergency room of the Premier's profit-driven, corporate consortia hospital in Brampton?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The two aspects of the question: First of all, I extend my deepest sympathies to the families who have been affected by this loss, their friends and their community; secondly, I take great issue with the characterization of a new, publicly owned, publicly accountable, publicly run hospital in Brampton, in the province of Ontario. We're proud of that hospital, proud of the people who work there and proud of the work that is taking place there.

I think it's unfortunate that somehow the leader of the NDP would link this tragedy with the means by which we financed the construction of this hospital. I think that is entirely unfair.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The family of Mr. Sidhu knows all about the financing of the hospital; they contributed \$25,000 to the community campaign. But Mr. Sidhu's son, Sandeep, described the 12-hour emergency room wait in the *Toronto Star* as, "Animals taken to the vet get better treatment." Will the Premier listen to Mr. Sidhu's grieving son, Sandeep, and call a public inquiry into this unfortunate death?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman: Building on the Premier's comments, of course we express sympathy in any circumstance where an individual passes. In the circumstances related to the operation of a new hospital in Brampton, a hospital that is currently benefiting from more than 200 additional employees helping to enhance long-awaited services in the community of Brampton, it is the obligation of the local hospital to work with their community. I know that steps were taken on that basis yesterday and that the leadership of William Osler will continue to work with the progressive community of Brampton—a growing and strong community—to seek to address any concerns and to enhance the quality of care and services that are there. And we will continue to make sure we play our role in ensuring that they have the resources to be able to do that.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Premier's and the Minister of Health's remarks, shall we say, contrast with the remarks by the head of the hospital corporation, who acknowledged that "the hospital is short-staffed. Part of the problem is that the province has not yet set the operating budget.

"Could we do a hell of a lot better with a fulsome budget? Absolutely," he said.

My question, though, is to the Premier. Will the Premier acknowledge that Mr. Sidhu's death is part of a troubling pattern at the Premier's profit-driven, corporate consortia hospital, a pattern that includes patients waiting 24 hours for essential health services like emergency appendectomy surgery and treatment for chest pains? And if the Premier agrees that these things are alarming, will he call a public inquiry to get to the bottom of what has gone wrong here?

Hon. George Smitherman: First off, let's be clear that any suggestion that a brick popped out of a wall in a building and caused these circumstances, which is really at the heart of the assertion the honourable member makes, is itself rather difficult to accept. It is that honourable member, I suppose, through benefits he has gained in this place, who might be able to talk about being mortgage-free. In the circumstances where we seek to rebuild hospital capacity in Ontario, we've determined that to have 100 projects ongoing, it's necessary to pay those over time, just as I'm doing with my house.

On the issue of operational funds for that hospital, I can say that Mr. Richards' comments are incorrect. Not only does the hospital know its operating budget and the post-construction operating plan implications for this year; it also has a very good sense of what those will be for the next two years. We'll continue to work with that

hospital through the local health integration network to make sure they have the resources to build up their service to the people of Brampton.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Premier: The Minister of Health may think this is about bricks; this is about the unfortunate death of a man who waited 12 hours in the emergency room, a very sick man who waited 12 hours and eventually died.

My question to the Premier is this: Does the Premier believe that his profit-driven, corporate consortia hospital that cost \$300 million more than a publicly financed, not-for-profit facility would have cost, that has fewer beds than were originally promised to the people of Brampton and that is clearly having big trouble delivering the high-quality health care services the people of Brampton deserve—does the Premier believe that Mr. Sidhu was well served by this hospital?

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Hon. George Smitherman: I would repeat to the honourable member, to the family and to the people in the community who are concerned that we have extraordinary sympathy for any circumstance that results in a death. But we, in this place, must also be inordinately mindful of a couple of things. Firstly, the provision of hospital service is continuing to be run by the same hospital board that ran Peel Memorial, 10 kilometres away on the other side of town. It's now being done with more than 200 additional staff in a state-of-the-art facility with a dramatic increase in capacity. I also want to be clear in suggesting to the honourable member that accountability for running 156 distinct and independent health care corporations must, of course, fall to those who are making clinical decisions in that environment, supported by the professional staff and the administration.

We'll continue to work with that hospital and all hospitals in Ontario to make sure they fulfill their very crucial and important responsibilities, and we'll do that alongside our partners in the local health integration network as well.

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question was to the Premier, and my question was, did the Premier think that Mr. Sidhu and his family were well served by this 12-hour wait in the emergency room?

In light of the tragedy, I want to remind the Premier of something he said in 2003, when the Premier promised to finance all new hospitals publicly because he said that profit-driven hospitals like the one in Brampton would lead "to the Americanization of health care" and "would cost more and deliver less." Well, it has cost more, and it certainly seems to be delivering less. In the case of Mr. Sidhu, he waited 12 hours in the emergency ward and he is now deceased.

Does the Premier think that Mr. Sidhu was well served? If you do, say so; if you don't, call a public inquiry so the family can learn what really happened here.

Hon. George Smitherman: Firstly, we believe that the people who serve the residents of Brampton and greater area at the William Osler Health Centre are dedicated to the challenging task they provide, and we'll continue to work with them.

I want to say to the honourable member that he talks about a capital model but he doesn't fess up and recognize that for the five years he was in the government of Ontario, that government built one hospital in Wawa—a very small hospital. Through the ambitious efforts of my colleague the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, we're involved in 100 construction projects investing \$5 billion or \$6 billion in long-awaited renewal of hospital stock in the province of Ontario.

We acknowledge that emergency rooms do pose challenges for too many Ontarians, and accordingly our dedicated efforts will be to enhance the quality of public services and to enhance the circumstances of performance in all of Ontario's emergency rooms, and William Osler will of course be among the hospitals we're working very closely with.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I think it's very unfortunate that when someone has waited 12 hours in the emergency room and eventually dies there, members of the McGuinty government try to blame someone for what may have happened 20 years ago.

Premier, my question to you is this: Given that you refuse to respect the wishes of Mr. Sidhu's family and call a public inquiry, will the Premier at least join me on Sunday in Brampton at a rally in memory of Mr. Sidhu, meet Mr. Sidhu's family face-to-face and explain to everyone in Brampton what is happening here when a very sick man can wait 12 hours in an emergency ward, eventually die, and the Premier and his Minister of Health want to talk about health care events 20 years ago? Will you at least do that, Premier?

Hon. George Smitherman: It's the honourable member himself who invites the contrast between the performance of a government that has decided to invest in hospitals and one that he was a senior member of that did nothing on this point, and it was your fixation on the issue of capital.

Yesterday, the hospital did the appropriate thing, as they are the accountable party for the delivery of services in this community: They met with the local community. This is the appropriate response in the circumstance. We have sympathy, of course, for any Ontarian who has passed, no matter the circumstances. But the obligation for the provision of care in the Brampton community, the decisions around that, the clinical decisions, are not made on my desk; they're made by the people who work in that hospital, from the clinical staff to the senior administration. Appropriately, they met with the community yesterday; they're working through these matters. We expect, of course, that there will be opportunities to enhance the quality of care in all emergency room environments. That's why we made it a focus of our election campaign and why it will be a focus of our efforts in this term of our government.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock, please. We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today His Excellency Danzan Lundeejantsan, Chairman of the State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia, and a parliamentary delegation. Accompanying the delegation is His Excellency Ambassador Gotov, Mongolia's ambassador to Canada. We warmly welcome you all to the province of Ontario.

New question.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Minister of Finance—and I'll ask if one of the pages could deliver to the Minister of Finance these documents, which are the public accounts for the province of Ontario for 2006-07.

Minister, yesterday—and I've got a quote from Hansard regarding your comments on the hundreds of billions of dollars of Ontario taxpayers' money lost in risky investment schemes. You said, "This is all documented in the public accounts." You went on to further say, "We routinely look at these—our members do." Could the minister instruct the House exactly what page these risky investments are detailed upon?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: They are contained in the annual statement of the Ontario Financing Authority, which is part of the legislative mandate of my ministry. And just to inform the member, in the event that he has not had a chance to read that document—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd ask the opposition members to tone it down a little, please.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: In the event the member hasn't had a chance to go through that document, he might have wanted to have looked at the August 24 CanWest News Service story. He might have wanted to have looked at the August 24 National Post story; that was on page 1. He might have wanted to have looked at the Toronto Star story of August 25, which was on page 1. In addition to those and to the Ontario Financing Authority minutes and annual reports that are audited and run by a board composed of people as diverse as Jack Mintz and others, he had all those opportunities. I'd invite him to read the business pages more carefully and also—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: What I did is—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd ask the honourable member to withdraw his comment, please. Thank you.

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I say to the minister that we did in fact read Hansard from yesterday, when you clearly said that these were outlined in the public accounts. We find out today that your comments were, to say it charitably,

not in meeting with the facts. My colleague the leader of the official opposition, Mr. Runciman, further pointed out that some of the things you said yesterday as well on another important matter were not consistent with facts. So we seem to have a problem here, I say with respect to my colleague, the Minister of Finance: The statements he's made in the Legislature do not seem to be wholly accurate around this issue. I worry he is trying to cover something up. He seems more concerned about protecting himself than protecting taxpayers, who may be on the hook for up to \$200 million in these risky investments.

The only way to get to the bottom of this is if you call in the Auditor General. Will you pick up the phone today and call him in to get to the bottom of this matter?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The numbers involved have been clearly outlined publicly, both in the public press as well as in the documents of the province of Ontario. The member opposite's party provided us with an order in council that not only defined the asset class but defined those instruments under the asset class. That's all been public for more than four years. In addition, the story has been well reported. Many other large organizations, including the Alberta treasury, Caisse de dépôt, and the Ontario teachers' pension plan, have been affected by developments in this particular class.

This government has eliminated a \$5.6-billion deficit that was left by that government. In fact, the prudent management of our economy and the books of this government allow us to invest in education, to invest in health care, and to deliver the kinds of services the people of Ontario have come to expect.

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FINANCEMENT DES HÔPITAUX

HOSPITAL FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question s'adresse au premier ministre. Comment est-ce que le premier ministre peut nous expliquer l'augmentation des coûts de construction de l'hôpital de Sarnia, un projet financé par le secteur privé à profit? Les coûts ont passé de 149 \$ millions l'an dernier à 319 \$ millions cette année. On parle ici d'une augmentation de 179 \$ millions qui auraient pu être investis dans les soins aux patients pour les résidents de Sarnia ou de toute la province.

Hon. George Smitherman: Merci pour votre question. I am a work in progress on this and other matters.

I want to thank the honourable member for her question. I anticipated that it might have come from another honourable member. We are, as on the earlier matter, enormously proud to be in a position in the province of Ontario to be investing again in the construction of hospitals. In the case of Sarnia, we have a hospital that is underway. We have a hospital that is under construction with a guaranteed price. This is very different from the circumstances we used to have, when the price came in well after the building had actually been constructed. Now we have a guaranteed price, and that is well known.

It differs from some of the estimated prices, and that explains why there is a differential, which you might characterize in a different way. This is a new model, where the cost overruns don't come later. We have a guaranteed price for construction and another new hospital underway in Sarnia, Ontario.

M^{me} France Gélinas: What families across Ontario want is the building of publicly run, publicly controlled and publicly financed hospitals without delay. Instead, public health dollars are being wasted on high interest rates, unnecessary lawyers' fees, consultants' fees and money for middlemen. It's happening at the private, for-profit hospitals in Brampton, Sarnia, North Bay, and the list goes on. The total cost overrun for the Liberals' private hospital scheme is climbing over \$1 billion. Why is the Premier building private-money hospitals that cost more and deliver less?

Hon. George Smitherman: No. I do think that delivering less was your term in office. Under that term, they had a chance to mention a minute ago that the only hospital, the only new hospital, constructed in five years of NDP was a very nice, but small, hospital in Wawa, Ontario. I contrast that to the offer—

Interjection.

Hon. George Smitherman: Maybe you can get a question.

I think it's very important that we acknowledge that the province of Ontario has an ambitious, more than \$30-billion infrastructure renewal in the hospital sector—\$5 billion or \$6 billion of new hospitals that are coming to life. The hospital in Sarnia is a perfectly good example of how a long-awaited hospital is replacing two very tired and worn-out facilities. We're doing so on the basis where a value-for-money audit has concluded—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask the leader of the third party to come to order.

Hon. George Smitherman: —that the taxpayer is well served by a model that offers a guaranteed price rather than the prior model which, in the case of Thunder Bay, as an example, saw exorbitant cost overruns all dealt with later. We have a guaranteed price that a hospital would be built on time or on budget and, if it's not, all of the obligation for the circumstances falls upon—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

MILITARY FAMILIES

Mr. Phil McNeely: My question today is for the Minister of Labour. I would like to ask you about the Fairness for Military Families Act, which was tabled and unanimously passed by this Legislature this week. Until now, military reservists were not protected by legislation to ensure they could return to their civilian jobs or comparable jobs with the same employer when a tour of duty is completed. There are many worries and concerns individuals have when they go overseas on a military

deployment. The last thing they should have to worry about is whether they will have their job when they come home. Minister, please give us details regarding this new legislation and the positive impact it has on military families.

Hon. Brad Duguid: On behalf of all of us, I'd like to commend and thank the member for Ottawa-Orléans for his leadership and for his advocacy on this issue. It's the advocacy of this member and other members in this House that helped us bring forward this very important legislation. This amendment recognizes the vital role that the Canadian Forces reservists play in protecting Canada's interests at home and abroad.

Interjections.

Hon. Brad Duguid: If the members opposite could stop heckling, they'd be able to hear me thank them and all members of this House for unanimously supporting this bill and the leadership of the Premier within this bill on Monday. The support of all members of this House enabled us all to ensure that not only will reservists not have to worry about their missions when they're abroad; all they have to worry about now is getting home safe, and that's important. They don't have to worry about whether they're going to have a job when they get home. I thank all members—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Phil McNeely: Minister, that is indeed good news. It is very comforting to know that when an individual leaves their family and their community to represent their country on a military deployment, they no longer have to worry about losing their civilian jobs when they return home.

I have many small businesses in my riding, and I know they will be interested to know how this change will impact them. Could you please explain to me how this will affect employers who have reservists on staff?

Hon. Brad Duguid: First and foremost, I think employers, like all Ontarians, are going to consider it their duty to do all they can to support these brave young men and women for putting their lives at risk for our country. I expect that the response from employers will be that it's a privilege for them to be able to assist these young men and women. When a military reservist returns home, the employer will be required to reinstate the reservist in the same position, if it exists, or in a comparable position if it doesn't.

Our ministry will enforce this legislation, but as I said, I don't expect employers to do anything but embrace this initiative, because employers, like all Ontarians, have full respect and admiration for these brave young men and women who are placing their lives at risk to protect our country and our property.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Robert Bailey: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your election to office and look forward to serving with you, and I would like to thank all hon-

ourable members of the House for the warm welcome when I first came.

My question is to the Minister of Health. In October, the people of Sarnia–Lambton were shocked to find that the cost of their long-promised and much-delayed hospital had more than doubled from an initial cost of \$114 million to over \$250 million. Many people believe it will be closer to \$325 million when completed. Would the minister tell this House and the people of Sarnia–Lambton how, on your watch, the cost of this project got so out of control?

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to welcome my honourable friend. I look forward to visiting the community and witnessing the construction of what we all agree is a long-awaited and much-overdue hospital.

I would make just one point to the honourable member with respect to prices: Until such time as you have a locked-in tendered price that is guaranteed, then any number that came before is simply an estimate. The numbers you threw out before were estimates developed in your very community by the hospital corporation, and once there was an established tendered price, then we all know in reality the bricks-and-mortar cost of building a very substantial and modern state-of-the-art facility in Sarnia.

Our government has, in the meantime, taken the responsibility for paying 90% of the bricks-and-mortar cost of this hospital, and the implication is that the good people of Sarnia, on the basis of the resources they've raised in partnership with the province of Ontario, will be able to see this long-awaited new facility open on time and on budget, and if it isn't, all the implications—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr. Robert Bailey: My constituents have been waiting many years for this project; I agree with the minister on that. The community has also been very generous in fundraising for this new hospital. These increased costs for the hospital are a direct result of the McGuinty government's 3-D health care policy: dithering, delay and denial.

My question to the minister today is, are the residents of Sarnia–Lambton going to be expected to raise any of these increasing costs, and will my constituents have to foot the bill for the government's dithering?

Hon. George Smitherman: It's interesting, of course, that you've adopted the same tag line from Mr. Tory's time in the Legislature. What I find interesting is no acknowledgment on the honourable member's part that for eight and a half years his party was in office. So if there was any dithering, I think we could both agree that that happened much more significantly on your watch. On ours, there's construction activity on-site, and Sarnia is getting a hospital that they have long required.

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As a result of the improvements that we've made on the local share, where the province of Ontario is paying 90% of the bricks and mortar, I do believe that the investments to date in the bricks and mortar by the

community of Sarnia will allow that hospital project to move forward. Additional costs associated with things like equipment and information technology, which are at the discretion of the local hospital, may be a matter that requires ongoing support from the local community in partnership. We will be proud to open this new and long-awaited state-of-the-art modern facility for the good people of Sarnia.

URANIUM MINE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is for the Premier. Plans for new nuclear reactors in Ontario have helped drive uranium prices through the roof, and now communities in Frontenac county are threatened with a potential uranium mine. Will you do your part to stop fueling uranium exploration in Frontenac county and cancel your nuclear megaproject today?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I thank the honourable member for his question. I think he's quite aware of some of the difficult challenges associated with ensuring that we have an adequate supply of reliable electricity in a way that provides the least compromise to our natural environment. We think that the modernization of our nuclear capacity represents an integral part of a responsible plan on a go-forward basis.

I had the great and good fortune the other day to meet with Ms. Dillman, an individual who is passionate and committed and nothing if not well-intentioned, a woman who has the full courage of her convictions. She is asking effectively that I put in place a moratorium on the mining of uranium in the province of Ontario. We are not mining any uranium at present, I can say that, but I cannot agree to place a moratorium, given our future requirements not only for our nuclear capacity but also for things like the production of radioisotopes which are used in the radiation treatment for our cancer patients.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Premier, in a letter to you last week, David Suzuki wrote, "As you know, I think it's nuts to embark on such an expensive megaproject when there are so many questions from a nuclear option."

You've talked with Donna Dillman; you've heard from David Suzuki. You're embarked on a path that has huge economic and environmental implications without a full environmental assessment. Will you turn around, come to your senses and abandon this nuclear megaproject?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think it's important to understand that what we're talking about here is the modernization of our nuclear capacity. I think 41% of our energy today comes from nuclear. That will drop to 31% in 2025. We are making tough choices here. I would prefer not to have to make any of them, but the fact is we have to because that is our responsibility in government.

One of the difficult decisions we've made is to phase out coal-fired generation in the province of Ontario. If I could replace all of our coal-fired generation with energy from wind, solar and other renewable sources like hydro-

electric capacity, I would in an instant; we just can't do that.

So we need to make some difficult decisions. We've decided to modernize our nuclear capacity because, among other things, it does not contribute to the single greatest challenge faced by humanity today in the minds of so many experts, which is climate change and global warming. The good news about nuclear is that it does not contribute to global warming.

HEALTHY LIVING

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: My question is for the Minister of Health Promotion. Minister, congratulations on your recent election victory and appointment to cabinet. I'm sure you'll make an excellent addition to the McGuinty team.

On December 3, the town of Collingwood and the Ontario Winter Games organizing committee held the 2008 winter games kick-off, with 100 days remaining before the games. For the 2008 Ontario Winter Games, our government is providing over \$590,000 to support the many athletes who will take part there. More than 3,000 athletes, coaches and officials will participate in the games, supported by more than 800 volunteers.

Minister, in what other ways is our government supporting amateur athletes across this province?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election.

I am humbled to be a member of this Legislature. I thank the member from Scarborough Southwest for his question. Our government is providing \$23.7 million to support amateur sports this year. This is an increase of almost 33% since 2003. On November 5, I was delighted to meet the Canadian rowing team upon their return from competition. These individuals are role models in their communities, and they exemplify the importance of investing in amateur athletes. They inspire us to live active, healthier lifestyles, and they make us proud as Ontarians. Our government values the contribution and the personal sacrifices that Ontario athletes make.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: This truly demonstrates our government's commitment to support Ontario's athletes, who make us proud on both the national and the international stage. But I'm also proud of our government's support to local communities to create opportunities for Ontarians to participate in daily physical activities.

Minister, Variety Village in my riding of Scarborough Southwest, for example, received a two-year grant in 2004-05 under our communities in action fund initiative to support their fitness and fun for everyone program, which provides physical activities for children living with disabilities. Minister, how else is our government supporting enhanced physical activities in this province?

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I am proud to say that our communities in action fund is providing access to sports and recreation activities to Ontarians, regardless of their age, ability or income. Over the last four years, our

government has provided approximately \$25 million in grants to over 800 organizations. Communities know they need their best, and we are providing them with the support they need to keep their communities active and healthy.

But our government recognizes that we need to do more to engage Ontarians in healthy eating and active living, and we need to be innovative in our approach. Thus, on December 1, our government removed the provincial sales tax on bicycle helmets and bicycles under \$1,000.

We know that prevention is better than cure. That is why we are encouraging Ontarians to become more active, to eat healthy and to quit smoking, because the health of Ontario's economy depends on the health of Ontarians.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke to withdraw his comment that he made.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What was it?

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I withdraw.

LICENCE PLATE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a question for the Premier. Premier, we found out this morning that in order to get a personalized licence plate in Ontario, one has to go through you. One of my constituents applied for a plate. I have a copy of it here, Mr. Premier.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask the member not to bring a prop to the House, please.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I apologize, Mr. Speaker, if it's a prop. I will ask the page to take it over to the Premier.

Premier, it was denied because of its religious connotation. Could you tell me and my constituents what that religious connotation would be? And since the minister seems to be unable to handle these things and you are Ontario's new self-anointed licence plate approver, I ask you whether you could fix this on behalf of my constituent Gary Battram.

Premier, has your intervention fixed the problem or just solved it for the newspaper?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I want to thank the Premier very much for sending this question to me. Delightful.

I look at some former ministers of transportation in the House here who had to go through this process over the years, probably much less quietly than now. When this program was established under the Conservative government many years ago, when the criteria were established and modified from time to time, very difficult decisions were made by the people within the Ministry of Transportation who review these. I know that each of those ministers knows how difficult that was; certainly I know that. What I indicated this morning was—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Answer?

1500

Hon. James J. Bradley: Well, I'll say in my supplementary what I indicated this morning. But I know that the member would know this has been going on for a long time, and these are difficult decisions that people made. In the supplementary, I'll answer further to him.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Premier, I'm sure you looked at it and I'm sure the minister looked at it. The letters on the plate are "PRSHNURS." The applicant intended it to read "Parish nurse." It is for a retired nurse who volunteers at the parish homeless shelter. "Parish" could be political or religious. Are you going to start rejecting plates with MPP on them? I think they would be a greater cause for road rage than this one.

The Premier said this morning in the scrum that it's one of those silly things government does that makes them outright laughable. It wasn't laughable to my constituent, who was supposed to get this plate for a Christmas present. Premier, since no one else in your government seems to be capable of fixing it, will you promise today that you will have this lady's licence plate in time for Christmas?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I appreciate all of the help I've had from members of the opposition.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: You need it. Nobody helped you as much as the Premier.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I thought the member was going to ask a question on day trading at Agricorp.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: No, I wasn't. I was asking about this and why the Premier—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Could we have the mic that's on dealt with, please? Thank you.

Minister of Transportation.

Hon. James J. Bradley: As I indicated today, hearing many of these instances coming forward, it's time that we looked at the criteria which have been established for evaluating individual licence plates. By looking at the criteria, I thought we should get some outside people, perhaps people, for instance, who are knowledgeable in the field of legal affairs, human rights, traffic safety and so on to give us some advice on this. I'm looking forward with anticipation to that. Meanwhile, any who are renewing a licence plate will be able to have their licence plate renewed as is.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. On Monday, the minister claimed tremendous progress on the issue of autism. I just want to ask the minister if she really thinks it's tremendous progress to keep 1,000 children with autism on an ever-growing list for treatment when, four years ago, your Premier promised that they were going to take care of this?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you for the question. I appreciate the opportunity to again talk about some of the progress we have made for kids with autism since we were elected in 2003. While there is still much

to do, we acknowledge that we have made tremendous progress.

Let me just talk about a few of the things. We have removed the age six cut-off that the Tory government imposed, we have tripled funding for services with autism, and we have almost tripled the number of children receiving IBI therapy. In fact, since this Legislature last met, we have expanded IBI even further, to 210 more children. We've announced a new respite program to give more than 3,000 families—the parents—a break from the difficult challenges of having a child with autism, and more than 800 kids with autism have gone to summer camp thanks to a new program we have supported.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think the minister knows very well that it was not an initiative of the government but a force of the courts that created the movement on this particular file, and that is absolutely shameful. The minister knows very well that families continue to mortgage their homes to try to get services. Families continue to go into great debt to try to get services for their children. So the bottom line is, if it wasn't for the action of the courts, this government would have done nothing. When is this government going to actually deliver on funding to clear the waiting list for those children and the families that need autism services in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: You might want to check your facts on that court decision.

I can tell you that while you have been playing politics with this issue and these families, we have been getting down to work. But we're not done. We are expanding capacity in this system, and you know it. For example, our new college program to train autism therapists has already graduated 200 new therapists, with 300 more to be enrolled next year. We've added three new colleges that are instructing in IBI therapy, autism therapy, including St. Clair in Windsor, Fanshawe College in London and Lambton College in Sarnia, bringing the total to 12 sites delivering this program. Our next step will be delivering IBI services in schools so that children can get the services in their own schools.

NORTHERN ECONOMY

Mr. Bill Mauro: My question is for the newly minted Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Last week, I was happy to announce an NOHFC investment of \$100,000 for Synergy Wood Ventures in Atikokan that will help them upgrade their facilities and position them competitively in the value-added marketplace. That's the latest example of how our government's refocused and revitalized heritage fund is truly spurring economic development across the north, from Thunder Bay to Sudbury, in communities large and small, stimulating both the private sector and the public sector in economic opportunities and job creation. What more can we expect from the NOHFC moving forward?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I would like to thank the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan for his question. I

truly want to commend him on his tireless work in the riding and congratulate him on his re-election.

If I may, I'll take this opportunity to remind members of the great work that our government has been able to accomplish through our re-invigorated northern Ontario heritage fund programs. Since 2003, we have created or sustained over 9,100 jobs through the NOHFC—jobs that would not otherwise be there. In addition, we have provided training and employment opportunities to young people in the north, including helping 735 young people find employment through youth internship and co-ops—some in your riding—and helping 120 young entrepreneurs create business opportunities in the north. Moving forward, I'll be touting these and other NOHFC funding initiatives. In fact, I'm looking forward to chairing my first NOHFC board meeting this Friday in Thunder Bay, where I look forward to making some positive announcements with my colleague from Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

Mr. Bill Mauro: We're hoping there will be more good news coming in that regard. It's fair to say that this government has been very proactive when it comes to economic diversification in our communities. Unlike the NDP, who, as of last week, seem to think that investment in the north is a waste of money, our government believes that we should be partners in economic innovation in the north. Certainly, the millions of dollars in NOHFC funding for the Molecular Medicine Research Centre in Thunder Bay was well invested. It will create hundreds of highly skilled, high-paying jobs and put Thunder Bay on the leading edge of a vital research field. Also, the substantial funding for the Emergency Services Training Centre in Thunder Bay means emergency response personnel from the north will be able to train and develop expertise at a state-of-the-art facility in northern Ontario—another great investment. What further steps will you take, Minister, to encourage economic diversification through the NOHFC?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: As my good friend and colleague has correctly noted, the NOHFC is an important tool in the north. Let me say that this Premier, this cabinet and this caucus are wholly committed to a northern Ontario that is vibrant and robust. Our firm pledge in the 2007 campaign—reiterated in last week's throne speech—to increase funding for the NOHFC from \$60 million to \$100 million annually is proof of that.

One area that I am particularly excited about is our support for information technology. To date, we have invested over \$25 million to develop more comprehensive cellular and broadband networks throughout the north, and I fully expect that we'll invest even more. We are motivated by a goal of connecting the far north and our remote communities, but also achieving productivity all along the TransCanada Highway. We recognize that, especially in today's fast-paced world, being connected enhances economic potential, educational opportunities, even—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

HOSPICE CARE

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Health. In your last Parliament, you made a funding announcement totalling \$9.9 million for six residential hospices providing end-of-life care for Ontarians. I commend you for that.

Missing from that list of six was Hospice Renfrew. Minister, you are very aware of the tremendous efforts being put forth by the team of local volunteers, craftsmen and contractors who have joined together to make Hospice Renfrew a reality; in fact, it's scheduled to open in early January. Will you treat Ontario's first rural hospice as you have treated six others in the province of Ontario and provide adequate funding to help in their construction costs?

1510

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to thank the honourable member for the question, and I hope he would convey to the good people—and there are a lot of them—who are lending their support to Hospice Renfrew that we're so proud of them. I had a chance to visit, I think on July 8 or 9, the site where construction was well under way. It is very exciting to know that they're going to open in January. They will open, as we're building 30 residential hospices in the province of Ontario—for the first time ever, they will open with operational support. No doubt about that; that's in place. I commit to the honourable member, as I did to the people in Renfrew that day, that I'm working diligently inside my ministry to identify the necessary resources to support not only Hospice Renfrew but also the others that are coming into emergence. I endeavour to keep the honourable member and other members posted on the progress I'm making in trying to find those much-needed resources.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Just to help you with your calendar, Minister, it was July 12. Maybe I pay more attention to your visits than you do sometimes.

We do appreciate those encouraging words; however, I didn't hear those accompanied by a commitment. As you know, the other hospices have received grants from \$1.15 million to just over \$2 million. As you intimated on that day, and we appreciated your visit—you didn't say it categorically, but you did intimate that Renfrew should expect the same kind of treatment as everywhere else. What we'd like from you today is a commitment, not that we're going to get at this, not that we think it's a great idea, not that we appreciate the great work of the people in Renfrew, because I know you do, and we do, but could we have a commitment that they will have that funding, so that Ontario's first rural hospice will be treated just as the others have been?

Hon. George Smitherman: It would not be appropriate for me to offer the commitment the member seeks before I have actually put my fingertips on the exact resource. But I would tell the honourable member that it's much more likely that the party that determined it was necessary to keep a health premium in place will have those resources than one that promised to reduce health care spending by \$3 billion.

FOOD SAFETY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. A few weeks ago, you decided against using your authority to immediately ban bisphenol A in children's products, despite numerous studies showing it has serious developmental implications for children, including relationship to type 2 diabetes and obesity. Two separate studies sponsored by the US National Institutes of Health have detailed concerns about infant exposure to BPA. Today, Ontario parents are learning that bisphenol A is also present in infant formula. Based on this new information, will you immediately take action to get bisphenol A out of infant formula and out of children's products?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I thank the member for his question. As he knows, we are in the process of setting up an expert panel to take a look at not only bisphenol A but also the other toxic materials we'll be dealing with later on in the spring.

I find it kind of interesting, though, that late one night I happened to watch the member on Goldhawk Live, as a matter of fact, when he was asked whether any other jurisdictions have actually banned bisphenol A, and he himself admitted that they're only studying the issue in Norway and that no other jurisdiction has banned it so far. We're taking action. We're setting up an expert panel to report back to us as soon as possible in the spring, so that we can in effect deal with not only that particular issue but also with other toxins that are out there in a meaningful way by legislation in the spring.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Dwight Duncan: On a point of order: I would like to correct my statement in Hansard earlier today in response to the question from the member for Niagara West—Glanbrook. In fact, the public accounts do have the full audited financial statement of the Ontario Financing Authority—volume 2, pages 184 to 194. The Provincial Auditor has concluded, "In my opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the authority."

VISITORS

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I would just like to take this opportunity to introduce Victoria Public School from Goderich. They're here from the great riding of Huron—Bruce. Welcome.

PETITIONS

STRANDHERD-ARMSTRONG BRIDGE

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the opportunity to introduce this petition on the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge once again.

"Whereas the close-knit communities of Barrhaven, Riverside South and Manotick combined have a total population of well over 50,000 people; and

"Whereas the only link between Barrhaven and Riverside South across the Rideau River is a lengthy commute either across the congested Hunt Club bridge or through the village of Manotick, which cannot sustain the traffic; and

"Whereas the city of Ottawa has identified the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge as a viable alternative to the traffic congestion created at the Hunt Club bridge and on Bridge Street in Manotick; and

"Whereas the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge is a much more environmentally sustainable option for south Ottawa commuters across the Rideau River than either the commute through Manotick or via the Hunt Club bridge; and

"Whereas the city of Ottawa has identified the cost of the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge, including all ramp, road widening and bridge work, at \$105 million; and

"Whereas the city of Ottawa has requested that a third of that funding, approximately \$35 million, be provided by the Ontario Liberal government, and further, that one-third from the federal government has already been committed; and

"The residents of Barrhaven, Riverside South and Manotick are calling on Dalton McGuinty" and the Ontario Liberal government to build the Strandherd-Armstrong bridge.

As a resident of south Ottawa, I support this petition, and I provide it to page Parker.

DIABETES TREATMENT

Mr. Jeff Leal: Speaker, let me wish you my sincerest congratulations on your election as Speaker. I know you will do a great job.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas more than 800,000 Ontarians are living with diabetes and only 10% of this number are people are living with type 1 diabetes. Currently insulin pumps are only available to people living with type 1 diabetes and only until they are 18; diabetes is a lifelong disease. An insulin pump assists people in maintaining and controlling blood sugar levels in order to reduce the number of acute complications and the severity of chronic complications caused by inadequately managed diabetes. An insulin pump is \$5,000 plus \$150 per year for the disposable supplies for persons who are not covered or under 18 years of age. Canadian research indicates that, for every dollar invested in helping Ontarians manage their diabetes appropriately, the government would save \$4 when not having to treat the serious diabetes complications that can develop for inadequately managed diabetes.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Be it resolved that insulin pump coverage should be available for all Ontarians living with diabetes, as the

insulin pump improves both blood sugar management and quality of life for persons living with diabetes.”

I agree with this petition and will affix my signature to it.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of the constituents of the riding of Durham which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas many vehicles on Highway 12 are continuing to travel at speeds exceeding the speed limit through the village of Greenbank;

“Whereas residents in the community are deeply concerned over the safety of pedestrians along this provincial highway in Greenbank because of the high speeds and volume of traffic;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request that the Ministry of Transportation proceed immediately with the following safety improvements:

“—repainting the crosswalk;

“—a new overhead flashing light crosswalk sign;

“—the installation of flashing lights at the entrance and exit to the village of Greenbank to the north and to the south” along Highway 12 “alerting drivers to the reduced speed;

“—consideration for this area to be designated a community safety zone.”

I’m pleased to support this on behalf of the constituents in the village of Greenbank. Ken Nelski would be one of them, amongst many.

1520

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker. It’s a pleasure to be on your right again.

I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It reads as follows:

“Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA served by the Mississauga Halton LHIN are growing despite the vigorous capital project activity at the hospitals within the Mississauga Halton LHIN boundaries; and

“Whereas ‘day-surgery’ procedures could be performed in an off-site facility, thus greatly increasing the ability of surgeons to perform more procedures, alleviating wait times for patients, and freeing up operating theatre space in hospitals for more complex procedures that may require post-operative intensive care unit support and a longer length of stay in hospital;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care allocate funds in its 2008-09 capital budget to begin planning and construction of an ambulatory surgery centre located in western Mississauga to serve the

Mississauga-Halton area, and enable greater access to ‘day surgery’ procedures that comprise about four fifths of all surgical procedures performed.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature in support of the petition and ask page Odessa to carry it for me.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Mr. Jim Wilson: I just want to thank all members of the assembly for agreeing to allow me to serve as a Deputy Speaker. I’ll try to do a good job—although Mr. Runciman pointed out that I may be the first Deputy Speaker that has to throw himself out.

“Petition to the Parliament of Ontario:

“Whereas the legacy of Pope John Paul II reflects his lifelong commitment to international understanding, peace and the defence of equality and human rights;

“Whereas his legacy has an all-embracing meaning that is particularly relevant to Canada’s multi-faith and multicultural traditions;

“Whereas, as one of the great spiritual leaders of contemporary times, Pope John Paul II visited Ontario during his pontificate of more than 25 years and, on his visits, was enthusiastically greeted by Ontario’s diverse religious and cultural communities;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario to grant speedy passage into law of the private member’s bill by Oak Ridges MPP Frank Klees entitled An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day.”

I agree with this petition and I’ve signed it.

PUBLIC WASHROOMS

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Congratulations on your appointment as Deputy Speaker. I know you’ll continue to do an excellent job, as you did last term and before that.

I have a petition that’s fairly short. It’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, regarding TTC washroom service:

“Whereas the TTC lacks adequate washroom facilities;

“Whereas this causes a problem for people suffering from ailments such as prostatitis, colitis and other similar problems;

“We, the undersigned, request the TTC to allocate proper funds to build washrooms at their subway stations.”

I agree with this petition and I’ve affixed my signature to it. I give it to page Nikita, who’s with me today.

MILITARY FAMILIES

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have a petition from members of Legions supporting the legislation protecting the civilian jobs of peacekeepers, filed by Mount Dennis Branch 31, Toronto; Branch 185, Blenheim; Victory Branch 317, London; Branch 60, Burlington; Branch 36, Dundas; and Branch 479, Niagara Falls.

DECORATIONS OF BRAVERY

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Mr Speaker, first of all, congratulations on your reappointment. I'm sure you'll do a great job, as you did in the past.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads:

"By signing this petition, I'm adding my voice to those of other Canadians joining Premier Dalton McGuinty's call to extend the eligibility time frame for the Cross of Valour and other decorations of bravery beyond two years. Mr. McGuinty's letter cited these needs that exist in certain situations where an application for bravery may not be submitted within the two-year time limit, citing specifically Constable Chris Garrett's case from the Cobourg police."

I will affix my name to this petition as well.

HIGHWAY 26

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 was approved by MPP Jim Wilson and the previous PC government in 2000 ; and

"Whereas a number of horrific fatalities and accidents have occurred on the old stretch of Highway 26; and

"Whereas the redevelopment of Highway 26 is critical to economic development and job creation in Simcoe-Grey;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Liberal government stop the delay of the Highway 26 redevelopment and act immediately to ensure that the project is finished on schedule, to improve safety for area residents and provide economic development opportunities and job creation in Simcoe-Grey."

Obviously, I agree with the petition and I've signed it.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This petition is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the people of Ontario deserve a universal, high-quality public health care system; and

"Whereas numerous studies have shown that the best health care is that which is delivered close to home; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government is working to increase Ontarians' access to family doctors through the introduction of family health teams that allow doctors to serve their communities more effectively; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government has fulfilled its promise to create new family health teams to bring more doctors to more Ontario families"—

Interjections.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Mr. Speaker, am I permitted to respond to the questions across the aisle, or not? Probably not. Excuse me, sir, but if you would permit me

to continue with this petition I would be very grateful to you.

The last sentence of this petition reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support the McGuinty government's efforts to improve access to family doctors through innovative programs like family health teams."

I certainly support this petition, and I'm delighted to put my name to it.

MILITARY FAMILIES

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have thousands more signatures supporting the legislation to protect civilian jobs of peacekeepers, filed with Long Branch 101, a Toronto Legion branch; Branch 618 of Stittsville; Branch 226 of Arthur; Branch 121 of Guelph-Cambridge and Bell's Corners Branch 593 from Ottawa.

SCHOOL FACILITIES

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the parents of St. Paul's elementary school in Alliston have raised many issues regarding the security, cleanliness and state of repair of their school; and

"Whereas a 2003 condition assessment completed by the Ontario government identified the need for \$1.8 million in repairs to St. Paul's elementary school; and

"Whereas the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board has approached the Ministry of Education with the intention of having the school deemed prohibitive to repair as they believe the school requires \$2.28 million in repairs, or 84% of the school replacement cost; and

"Whereas there are ongoing concerns with air quality, heating and ventilation, electrical, plumbing, lack of air conditioning and the overall structure of the building, including cracks from floor to ceiling, to name a few;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Education immediately deem St. Paul's elementary school prohibitive to repair, secure immediate funding and begin construction of a new facility so that the children of St. Paul's can be educated in a facility that is secure and offers them the respect and dignity that they deserve."

I agree with this petition and I've signed it.

MILITARY FAMILIES

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I have, continuing, thousands more signatures on a petition of Legion members to confirm and support the legislation to protect civilian jobs of peacekeepers. These have been filed by Branch 120, Georgetown; the Royal Canadian Air Force Association, Wing 410, Chatham; the Royal Canadian Air Force Association, Wing 427, London; the Royal

Canadian Air Force Association, Wing 422, of North Bay; and Oshawa Naval Veterans Club.

1530

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 4, 2007, on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for Hamilton Centre.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'll be splitting my time with my leader and other members of our caucus for this debate.

It's my pleasure to have the first opportunity to give remarks in this House in regards to inaction by the government, in responding to the throne speech, after having been re-elected in the new riding of Hamilton Centre. I was very pleased with the results obviously, and I'm happy to be here to remind the government of some of the very serious issues facing my community. Unfortunately, not many of those issues were given much attention in the throne speech, and people of Hamilton are quite concerned that their continued struggle on many fronts was not acknowledged.

It's interesting, my first opportunity to remark on the throne speech actually came before the throne speech was delivered. A reporter said to me in a bit of an off-the-record type of discussion, "What do you think is going to be in the throne speech?" I said "Well, we'll see. If it's reflective of the campaign commitments made by the Liberals, there's not really very much there." So we chuckled, and the camera went on, and we went on record.

It's interesting because the same question came up, and I didn't think of it at the time, and that's always the way it happens with me—well, maybe not always, but sometimes. The question was that some people are saying that the throne speech is going to be very small on commitments, considering how many broken promises the government had to deal with over the past four years and that they're going to lower the bar in terms of what they put out there as an agenda after having just been re-elected.

Of course, I didn't think of it at the time, but afterwards, I had this vision in my mind of a limbo bar and the Liberal caucus going lower and lower to try to get under that limbo bar. How low can you go when it comes to not making the kinds of commitments and statements that the people of Ontario want to hear around issues like poverty reduction? No matter how much you sing, my friend from Trinity-Spadina—who is a very good singer—I will not do the limbo. I'm sorry, that's not hap-

pening in this House, my friend, even though you sing very, very well.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Go for it.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Nonetheless, on the issue of poverty reduction, it's pretty—I want to say "disappointing," but "disappointing" simply does not capture the feeling that I think many of us had in this province when we saw that the only thing that the McGuinty Liberals were prepared to do on the poverty issue was to set a target for the target, set a target date for the targets to be announced, at which time we'll find out if and when this government has any intention at all of tackling the alarming rise of poverty in this province.

I can tell you that this is an issue that not only has been recently brought to light in a forceful way by the United Way of Greater Toronto, but also in the city of Hamilton, this is an ongoing issue that we have been struggling with. People are being crushed by the weight of the poverty that is lasting and growing in this province, and has become ongoing in terms of inter-generational poverty. It has to stop. There has got to be some real positive action.

Of course, New Democrats had some great ideas as to how we could actually get to some action, as opposed to simply more rhetoric and setting of targets, more of what my leader liked to say during the election, Liberals recanting this phrase of being so—"Oh, we feel your pain." Do you recall that? Do my colleagues recall that? "We feel your pain."

The government likes to say that they feel the pain of people living in poverty, that they feel the pain of people who are losing their jobs in this province. Unfortunately, they don't feel that pain at a close enough proximity to actually move them into action to get something done about that pain. The urgency simply is not there for the government. As a result, more and more children are in school trying to learn when they don't have a stable home life because their parents are constantly on the move, because rent can't be made and they're being evicted from one place to the other. Children are not able to learn at school because they have to go to school ill-prepared because they don't have nutritious food in their stomach.

This is an absolute disgrace in a province like Ontario. It's an absolute disgrace that the government has not immediately put an end to the national child benefit clawback. It is a disgrace that this government still to this day continues to claw back over \$1,000 from families in this province on an annual basis. How can they even look at themselves in the mirror when they know that by their inaction these families continue to suffer day after day and month after month in this province? It is absolutely unacceptable.

On the other side of the coin, we have many, many people who are going to work every single day, sometimes to two and three jobs, just to try to make ends meet on a minimum wage in this province that is absolutely embarrassing. People are working very, very hard, and after working a 40-hour workweek they are coming home

with a pay packet that does not even get them to the poverty level in the province of Ontario. That is absolutely disgusting. That is absolutely unacceptable. And once again, the Liberals feel the pain, feel the pain so much that they are saying to people, "You can wait"—not another year, not another two years, but even longer than that.

Guess what happens? After those years of waiting, you are still going to be well below the poverty line. Why? Because by then, inflation will have increased and the poverty line will have been raised, to probably make sure that any increase that the Liberals are promising is going to still keep you below the poverty line. That is unacceptable in a province like Ontario where there is so much wealth, where people on the other side of the tracks, if you will, people in some environs, are making money hand over fist.

It has been a couple of years now that the economy has been strong. Granted, the most recent job losses over the last couple of years have created great concern, and there's no doubt that we are really worried about where the economy is going to go. But we've just wasted four years of Liberal government where people were not able to begin to climb out of the poverty trap, and I say, "Shame on this government."

I look in my community and I see every day people who are struggling. I see a government that got re-elected over a silly discussion that they liked to keep pulling people back to, when everyone knew that the discussion was a red herring and that the discussion should have been about something different. It should have been about the extent to which we could have an education system that is properly funded in this province.

Instead of dealing with that issue in an appropriate way, the government used it to refocus and reframe the campaign so they didn't have to talk about the issue of poverty in our communities. They didn't have to talk about the fact that thousands upon thousands upon thousands of manufacturing jobs were walking out of this province. They didn't have to talk about the fact that the minimum wage is at a level that ensures, that guarantees that people, no matter how hard they work, are going to remain living in poverty in this province.

I would say it's a sad commentary on this government that not only did they not deal with any of these issues over the last four years, but then they turned around and brought forward a throne speech that reinforced their lack of commitment to these kinds of issues, that reinforced their history as leaders in this Legislature who don't care about the very basic issues that families run up against day in, day out in cities and communities across this province. At the end of the day there is going to be a significant repercussion, maybe not to your electoral fortunes, but certainly if you take a look off of your pedestal to the communities that are you supposed to be representing, you have to acknowledge that the repercussions are there already and they are getting worse and worse.

I'm going to turn the floor over now to my leader, who is going to be speaking in a minute or two in regard to the

throne speech, but I have to say that there were real opportunities for the government to say, "We've acknowledged that these issues are out there, and we're prepared to do this, this and this to start tackling those issues right away." But no, they decided that they were going to bring a throne speech together that's a how-low-can-you-go kind of throne speech, a throne speech that reduces, once again, people's expectations.. Granted, they raised expectations to enormous levels during the last campaign back in 2003 and then spent four years dashing people's expectations, dashing people's hopes and breaking promise after promise, so maybe they learned a little bit. But the reality is that what they needed to learn, they didn't learn, which is that you have to take care of the people of this province. That's what your job is.

1540

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Children's aid.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Whether it's a matter of making sure we have the kinds of programs we need and that we should have—and my friend mentioned to me just in passing here the issue of child care, and here we are again.

The \$300 million that the McGuinty Liberal government promised last time around never showed up. We now have massive expansion in child care in the for-profit sector, and we know that all the research and studies show that that is not the way to go. In fact, the quality of child care is less in the for-profit sector than it is in the not-for-profit sector. Yet, that's where the expansion is happening—not that there is much expansion at all. The unfortunate reality is that the people of this province still don't see a child care system, an early learning and care system, that really and truly does developmental work with children at a young age to prepare them to succeed and to excel in this province. Yet, the rhetoric the government brings is rhetoric around the transformation of the economy. So when it comes to preparing young children to be able to take advantage of education at the very earliest age, which is what we know needs to happen to be able to take advantage of this new economy, they're not prepared to do that. But when it comes to trying to justify why they're doing nothing about job loss, on the other hand, there they go. They say, "The job loss is just a result of the transformation of the economy."

Well, you can't have it both ways. You have to start somewhere. Unfortunately, this government is going nowhere and they're going fast, and unfortunately they're dragging the rest of us with them.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The Chair recognizes the leader of the third party.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I want to thank the member for Hamilton Centre for filling in for me. The schedule of this place does not always accommodate being in two places at one time, so I want to thank her very much.

I have a few comments I want to make about what I thought was a thoroughly underwhelming throne speech. I want to comment on a couple of areas in particular.

First of all I want to comment on what the government had to say about working with First Nations and relations with First Nations, and then this government's sorry record.

There have been a number of Supreme Court of Canada decisions which have said that all governments—federal and provincial—have a constitutional responsibility to consult and accommodate the rights and interests of First Nations when those governments plan to implement legislation, pass legislation or have a certain pathway of government action—a number of constitutional decisions going back now over the last eight years. They have all said the same thing. So the government spent at least a page of the throne speech saying that it wants to forge a new relationship with First Nations in Ontario. But what's happened over the last four years? Over the last four years, this government has breached its constitutional obligations and responsibilities to First Nations in Ontario not once, not twice, but repeatedly. This is a government that, under the Mining Act, has granted mining exploration permits, without any consultation with First Nations, for companies to explore for minerals in the traditional territory of First Nations, areas where there's hardly a non-native person visiting, never mind living there. It has done it all without any consultation or accommodation of First Nations.

Case in point: a case that has resulted in literally hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal costs and the forced deprivation of a First Nation. When you read the judgment of the judge who heard the case—I'm talking about the Platinex case—the trial judge said that the First Nation has done nothing wrong here; they're merely trying to defend their constitutional rights and their treaty rights. The mining exploration company hasn't done anything wrong; they're simply relying on a permit that has been given to them by the McGuinty government. But as he points out in his judgment, it's the McGuinty government that has been missing in action, that failed to consult, failed to accommodate, and this has now resulted in a court case where the mining company is trying to sue a First Nation for \$11 billion. The First Nation is having to take money out of its housing allowance, its education allowance and its health care allowance merely because they have to go to court to defend themselves.

I think any reasonable person would say that the government's words, as used in their throne speech, bear no relationship to the government's conduct, that the flowery words used in the throne speech are completely at odds with this government's repeated breach of its constitutional obligations and responsibilities with respect to First Nations in Ontario.

I hearken back to the words of Ontario's Ombudsman, who in his annual report last spring said of the McGuinty government, "This is a government that consistently over-promises and under-delivers." The throne speech is full of all of the flowery words, but if you actually look at the conduct of this government over the last four years with respect to First Nations in this province, it is something that this province should be ashamed of.

But I was reminded of something else. The new Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is not a completely new minister. He is also, at the same time, the former minister responsible for aboriginal affairs. You change the name and say, "Oh, we've made a giant step forward." But as the minister responsible for native affairs three years ago, I remember him standing in this House saying with great flourish and much chest-beating that the McGuinty government was committed to forging a new relationship with First Nations. That was three years ago—almost the same words used in the throne speech. What happened? After much chest-beating and self-congratulation for that speech, the government went ahead and failed to meet its constitutional and legal obligations to First Nations.

My advice to First Nations is to read the old speech, read the new speech, look at what happened in between and be very careful. This is a government that consistently over-promises and under-delivers.

I was also struck because, reading the throne speech, the government now says it's going to close coal-fired generating stations.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Again.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Again. I went back and I read the 2003 throne speech. It said that coal-fired generating stations were all going to be closed by 2007. What have we got—about 27 days left in 2007? There's something a little out of balance here.

But I was not to be defeated just by reading the 2003 throne speech. I went back and read the 2005 throne speech, and it said, "Well, they're not going to be closed in 2007; the coal-fired generating stations are going to be closed in 2009." It must be that either the government can't get its dates right—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Or they're into recycling.

Mr. Howard Hampton: —or they're into recycling of promises in a big way, because in the 2003 throne speech, it said "closed by 2007"; in the 2005 throne speech, it said "closed by 2009." Imagine my surprise when I read in the 2007 throne speech, "Oh yes, they're going to close."

Mr. John Yakabuski: No date.

Mr. Howard Hampton: No, no; it was 2007, then 2009, and now it's 2014. If you repeat something often enough, hopefully people might swallow it. But I think what people are having difficulty swallowing is that the time out there is getting longer—much longer.

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I want to say to people at home that the McGuinty government is trying to say to you that you have to build nuclear plants to close the coal plants. Well, there's just one detail, but it's an important detail. The fact is that even if the government said today, "We're going to build new nuclear capacity," it would take until at least 2016-17 to build new nuclear capacity in this province. It's tremendously complicated financially, there are some environmental issues, there are some regulatory issues and it is tremendously complicated in terms of the engineering and construction.

The government says the coal plants are going to close in 2014, but the nuclear capacity capable of replacing coal won't be there until 2016-17 and, I'd even bet, 2018. So, I would say to folks at home that they'd better be careful about that 2014 promise too, as mentioned in this throne speech, because it doesn't have any more credibility than the 2007 promise or the 2009 promise.

The fact of the matter is that if the McGuinty government is to have any hope of closing coal-fired generating stations by 2014, there is only one way to get there, and that is to adopt the program that has been adopted in jurisdictions like California, Manitoba and the New England states: implement an aggressive, thorough, energy efficiency energy conservation strategy, some aimed at the residential sector—yes, very much aimed at the residential sector—some aimed at the institutional sector, the commercial sector and the manufacturing sector. Do we see any of those things in Ontario? No.

If you live in Manitoba today, you could get a \$5,000 low-interest loan that you could use to retrofit your home—put in high-efficiency natural gas heating, put in energy-efficient appliances, doors, windows, insulation—to substantially reduce your energy consumption. What you save on your monthly hydro bill, and then save on your monthly natural gas bill, goes toward payback of the loan. You don't even notice. No payments come out of your own pocket. It's simply what you save by reducing your energy consumption going toward paying the loan.

Do we have that in Ontario? No. I've seen lots of ads on television. I've seen lots of public relations campaigns under the McGuinty government over the last four years. But that program does not exist in Ontario.

In the New England states, on those very hot summer days, there is an incentive strategy for major users of electricity to reduce their consumption and actually get paid for doing that. This is one of the ways the New England states manage their peak electricity usage. It works very well. It's a demand-reduction strategy that has been used in New England for a significant number of years, and it's very successful.

California has reduced its electricity consumption by 12,000 megawatts over what it otherwise would have been. What is 12,000 megawatts? It's the equivalent of three Darlington-sized nuclear stations. What did Darlington cost to build? Almost \$15 billion. So we're talking about the possibility of forgoing something in the range of \$45 billion of nuclear construction, which is exactly where the McGuinty government is headed—a \$40-billion nuclear megascheme.

How has California done it? Not by inventing some magical new technology. They have the most stringent regulations in terms of requiring energy-efficient appliances. You cannot sell a stove, fridge, air conditioner or television in California unless it meets the most strict energy efficiency requirements, and by doing that, they have significantly reduced the amount of electricity being used in residences.

The California building code, which is already in place, not only for residences but for multi-residential

units like apartment buildings, institutions, hospitals, schools, community centres, swimming pools and hockey rinks, requires that buildings be built according to the strictest energy efficiency standards.

So it's not about inventing some magical new technology; it's about making available, first of all, the financial substance so that individuals, communities and institutions can make the energy efficiency investments and then get the money back through reduced energy use. It's about requiring the use of the most energy-efficient appliances and it's about having a housing building code that requires people to meet those standards. Then things start to happen.

I met with the director of energy efficiency from California, who said, "There's no secret to this. You have to show people that within five years they'll get their money back. If you stretch it out longer than five years and people can't see themselves getting the money back that's required to make the energy efficiency investment, they won't do it. But as long as you show that they're going to get their money back within five years, people will willingly sign up because they can see a time horizon within which this makes financial sense."

Do we see any of this from the McGuinty government? None. None whatsoever. At the end of the day, when you strip through the superficial advertising campaign, the energy strategy of the McGuinty government is simple: "Go nuclear and go big. Go nuclear and go very big. Go nuclear and go very expensive." That is going to be a very big pill for manufacturers, employers and ordinary consumers in this province to swallow.

I suggest that we'll have more opportunity to revisit this issue again and again as how misguided it really is becomes more publicly evident.

I also want to address the issue of jobs because there's an urgency of jobs—a real urgency. Virtually every day, another paper mill, pulp mill, sawmill, another auto assembly plant, another auto parts plant, another steel plant shuts down in this province. We are very soon going to be at the point where 200,000 good manufacturing jobs will have been lost.

The McGuinty government wants to pretend that getting a job with a temp agency is somehow going to replace these good manufacturing jobs. They want to pretend that somehow getting hired on by Wal-Mart is going to replace these good manufacturing jobs. They want to pretend that McDonald's is the answer to the loss of these good manufacturing jobs.

I invite them: Go to Windsor and make that argument today. Go to Thunder Bay and make that argument.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Go to Hamilton.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Go to Hamilton and make that argument. Go to Oshawa and make that argument.

The McGuinty government is oh, so pleased that they didn't have to address any of these issues in a meaningful way during the election campaign. They were oh, so happy that they could just skip by those issues. But let me tell you: In the weeks and months ahead, the McGuinty government is not going to be able to skip by

these issues because they are becoming so large and the economic repercussions of them for the rest of the economy are becoming so substantial that the McGuinty government is going to be forced to address these issues in some manner.

If the McGuinty government thinks that holding a photo op on trans fats one day and holding another photo op in terms of military personnel the next day is somehow going to gloss over and allow it to escape these issues—that strategy might see them through until Christmas, but in the new year it is simply not going to pass muster in any way, shape or form.

I looked at the throne speech and I was trying to find some urgency on the part of the government, some urgency to take on and address this issue. I've listened over the last couple of days as I've tried to ask the Premier about this. The Premier's response seems to be that he believes in global corporations, and whatever global corporations want to do in the form of the global economy, that's fine with him. Well, other jurisdictions don't see it that way.

1600

I asked the Premier about his conversation with the Premier of Quebec. Quebec is actually putting in place a strategy to try, as best they can, to sustain and maintain and reposition manufacturing jobs in that province. One thing they've done is they have an industrial hydro rate that allows manufacturers to continue to function in that province. In fact—I'm sure that many people, especially across northern Ontario, know this—as paper mills have shut down in northern Ontario, paper mill after paper mill has transferred production and jobs to Quebec. When Abitibi made the decision to close the paper mill in Kenora and put over 400 people out of work, they announced that production would be moving to a mill in Quebec. When Cascades shut down their paper mill in Thunder Bay and put 400 people out of work, they announced that production would be moving to Quebec and the jobs would be moving to Quebec. When Abitibi closed their Abitibi Mission mill in Thunder Bay, they announced that production and jobs would be moving to Quebec. When Inco made the decision a year and a half ago to shut down the copper refinery in Sudbury, when you asked—you didn't have to dig very deep before they simply said, "Look, it's cheaper for us to send our copper to a smelter in Montreal and have it processed there than it is to reinvest in the smelter in Sudbury and pay much higher electricity rates." That is going to continue to happen. We're now starting to see it in the auto parts sector. Any auto parts that are involved in casting, stamping or plastics moulding are looking at moving production out of Ontario, simply because they recognize that their cost structure in a province like Quebec or a province like Manitoba is much lower. Hydro rates are a big part of that.

I heard the Premier the other day say, "Oh, you know, we can't do anything about industrial hydro rates." I invite the Premier to look at Germany. Germany leads the world in terms of investment in wind power and in

terms of investment in solar power. They lead the world in terms of some of the things they're doing to reduce their energy consumption. They know that these things are not cheap. Investing in solar power and investing in wind power is not cheap. They have simply made the social and political decision that they want, notwithstanding their investments in expensive wind power and expensive solar power, to continue to maintain manufacturing jobs in Germany.

While the residential cost of electricity may be 11 or 12 cents a kilowatt hour and going higher, the steel industry in Germany has an industrial hydro rate of 5.5 cents a kilowatt hour. Why? Because they recognize that the steel industry in that jurisdiction is the foundation of their auto industry, it's the foundation of their shipbuilding industry and of much of their heavy manufacturing, and it's, in many ways, also the foundation of their engineering industry. I invite members: Look at many of the machine parts or the machinery equipment that is produced in the world today: Much of it comes from Germany. Every time there is a new-technology strand board mill built in Ontario, if you look at where the presses come—and the presses are worth hundreds of millions of dollars—they're manufactured in Germany. Germany has made the decision that they're going to be in the forefront of promoting wind power, they're going to be in the forefront of promoting solar power and they're going to be in the forefront of reducing energy consumption in their jurisdiction, but they've also made the decision that they're going to have an industrial hydro rate which will support jobs.

I say to this government: When you have paper mills shutting down, when you have steel mills shutting down and you can walk down Yonge Street and see major retailers with the air conditioning cranked right up and the doors open, blowing air-conditioned air out the door, there's something wrong with the electricity strategy. You should not have people losing their jobs and at the same time see major retailers like the Gap on a hot summer day with the doors open and the air conditioning cranked right up. You should not have that kind of situation.

Mr. John Yakabuski: What were you doing at the Gap?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I don't go to the Gap, but I can tell you that the person who did the survey does.

So I looked in this throne speech for a sense of urgency in terms of dealing with these issues. What did I find? I found more platitudes. I found, as the Ombudsman said, a government that over-promises and under-delivers. I found no strategy, no urgency, no direction. In fact, basically what this government is saying after the loss of almost 200,000 manufacturing jobs is that it now wants to appoint one of its members to study the problem. Who did they appoint to study the problem? The former Minister of Natural Resources, who presided over the destruction of 45,000 jobs in the forest sector. Let me tell you, for those people who are in the steel sector, the auto sector and the manufacturing sector generally, this is

not good news, to have somebody who presided over the destruction of 45,000 good jobs in northern Ontario now advising the government on what to do about the threat to manufacturing jobs generally. This is not a good start.

But that was the only plan of action that I saw in this throne speech. As worker after worker after worker, family after family after family, community after community after community are being devastated with the loss of manufacturing jobs, the response of the McGuinty government is that they're going to have a minister who wasn't very good in his job study the issue. This is not a plan of action. It certainly doesn't express any sense of urgency.

There are a number of other issues that also caught my eye, and I can't mention them all here, but I know that other members of our caucus are going to raise them in the days and weeks ahead. But I did want to make note of this: The McGuinty government spent a fair bit of time in the throne speech talking about poverty. Let me tell you, with the loss of 200,000 good manufacturing jobs, with the cost of living, hydro rates, natural gas rates, transit rates, property taxes, all these things escalating significantly, poverty has become a big problem. In fact, under the McGuinty government in the first four years, Ontario has become the child poverty capital of Canada—not Newfoundland any more, not New Brunswick any more, not Quebec; Ontario has become the child poverty capital in Canada.

The government pats itself on the back and beats itself on the chest, talks a good game on poverty, but I was looking for a strategy, an action plan. Once again, do you know what the action plan is? Well, the action plan is that the government's going to have a cabinet committee to study the issue, and a year from now one of the things they're going to study is, "What is poverty?" Children who wake up hungry, who go to school hungry and who come home hungry can tell you what poverty is about.

We've had postcard after postcard, placard after placard delivered in this Legislature from kids who tell you what poverty's like. When other kids laugh at you when you go to school because your shirt and your shoes are worn and have holes in them, when other kids make fun of you when you go to school because they know you don't have the money to participate, whether it's a hot dog day or a pizza day, when kids get up in the morning hungry, go to school hungry and go to bed hungry, those are clear indications of poverty. We have organizations across Canada that have indicia of what poverty is. They can even tell you what the poverty level is in a large city, a medium-sized city, what it is in a small town and what it is in a rural area, based upon differentials and costs—the cost of rent in a city versus the cost of transportation in a rural area. If anything, I think poverty has been studied to no end, yet the plan of the McGuinty government is to study the issue, and then in 2008—and be wary; this reminds me of the promises about the coal plants—they intend to set some targets.

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There are some things the McGuinty government could do today if it really cared about poverty. Let me

give you an example of one. Many years ago the federal government realized that there was a problem of too many children growing up impoverished, so they created the national child benefit and the national child benefit supplement. They actually send out a cheque to those lowest-income kids so that those kids won't go to bed hungry and won't go to school hungry. But what does the McGuinty government do? What have they been doing for the last four years? They've been clawing back that money from those lowest-income kids in Ontario, those very kids who go to bed hungry and go to school hungry, those very kids who know what it's like to be laughed at because they go to school with holes in their clothing and other kids pick on them. The McGuinty government has been clawing back money from those very low-income kids for the last four years. And tomorrow the McGuinty government is going to continue to claw back money from those lowest-income kids, and next year the McGuinty government is going to continue to claw back money from those lowest-income kids, and two years from now, and three years from now.

If the McGuinty government had any sincerity at all, any integrity at all, about addressing the issue of poverty, they would stop clawing back the money from those lowest-income kids today. Yet they're going to get a cabinet committee to study the issue, and after the cabinet committee has studied the issue, they're going to set some targets. They're not even going to set targets this year. In 2008, they're going to set targets for out-years.

There's something else this government could do if it was really serious about addressing poverty. We know you can go out and work for the minimum wage in Ontario and you still fall below the poverty line. You can work more than full-time, more than 40 hours a week, for the minimum wage in Ontario and still fall below the poverty line. It's been demonstrated in study after study after study after study, yet the McGuinty government wants to continue to study the issue. There's no secret here. Other jurisdictions have done this. The state of Washington has done it; the state of Oregon has done it; Ireland has done it; Great Britain has done it. They substantially increased their minimum wage and then they did the studies, after they had increased the minimum wage. And do you know what the studies show, almost universally? That raising the minimum wage makes a significant difference for low-income workers, that the people who will benefit the most from a significant increase in the minimum wage are low-income workers.

But do you know what they also show? The people who benefit second-most from an increase in the minimum wage are local small businesses. Why? Because when low-paid workers get an increase in the minimum wage, they don't spend it on a holiday in the Caribbean, they don't buy an expensive foreign car, and they don't put it in an offshore mutual fund. They don't have any of those things. They spend virtually all of their additional income in the local community, on things like clothing

for their kids or food or paying the rent or other necessities. And who gets the money very quickly? The local small business community gets that money very, very quickly. If the McGuinty government were really serious about addressing poverty, they would raise the minimum wage to \$10 an hour now, when it would make a difference, not three years from now, when people will be further behind.

I simply want to raise one other point. There are all kinds of issues on which I disagree with the current federal government, but one of the things they've done is actually given the McGuinty government some money for affordable housing. In fact, over the last three years they have given the McGuinty government significant sums of money for affordable housing.

There's a crying need for affordable housing. In Toronto alone, there are tens of thousands of families on a waiting list for affordable housing. It's the same situation in Hamilton and the same situation in places like Oshawa or Ottawa: a waiting list for affordable housing. Has the McGuinty government used that federal money that was given to them by the federal government for affordable housing? Have they used it for that purpose? No. In fact, when you sit down and look at the numbers, there are only about 300 units—

Mr. Michael Prue: Two hundred and eighty-five.

Mr. Howard Hampton: —285 units of housing that have been built that are truly affordable for low-income people. This cannot be. This government should not be sitting on money given to it by the federal government for affordable housing. And yet, the net result in terms of housing that is affordable for low-income people is a grand total of 285 units under the McGuinty government. That is the reality.

If this government was really serious about doing something about poverty, they would have taken the money that's been made available to them by the federal government and invested it already in truly affordable housing for low-income families. But I regret, when I read the throne speech—did I see a plan? Did I see a commitment? Did I see a strategy? No; nothing, just a cabinet committee that's going to study the issue.

I am reminded once again of what the Ombudsman said in his annual report last year, that this is a government that persistently overpromises and underdelivers. And when I read the throne speech, in my attempt to find if there was something which was going to change, if there was some new revelation, I regret to say that I saw more of the same: no urgency in terms of manufacturing jobs, no recognition that this government has been in breach of its constitutional and legal obligations to First Nations, no strategy to deal with the issue of poverty, no plan other than go nuclear, go big for energy in this province.

I say to people across this province that, regrettably, I don't see much that is new, much that is different or much that is inspiring in this throne speech. Regrettably, it is more of the same, but at the same time that we see more of the same, the issues grow more severe.

The challenge of job loss is more difficult to address, and it's going to become much more difficult to address in the weeks and months ahead. Poverty with that kind of job loss is going to grow. The need for a thoughtful resolution of Ontario's energy problems and the need to recognize that there has to be some affordability of energy for industry continues to grow as a problem.

I was hoping that there was going to be a plan, a strategy, an urgency, a direction, a path that was going to be identified in this throne speech. It hasn't happened. So our job over the weeks and months ahead will be to hold a government that seems to like photo ops, that seems to like superficial photo ops more than ever, to account, and to demand a higher standard than they have delivered at any point in the past and have any evidence of delivering on in the future.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

1620

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: First of all, let me congratulate all the re-elected members and the new members in this great place, in the Legislature, for another term. I'm delighted to be here. Before I get rolling, I want to introduce a couple of my staff, Darlene Warner and Jenn Carreira, who are here watching these proceedings today.

Just before talking about the throne speech, I want to address a couple of comments I heard from my colleagues from Hamilton Centre and Kenora-Rainy River about their surprise about the throne speech, the lack of whatever content—they were expecting something different. What I don't understand is: It was our platform. People voted for the platform. So if they're really surprised, then I would say that they weren't really paying much attention. But anyway, I'm going to leave that for another day to debate, and I look forward to debating in this House as we move forward.

I just want to take the opportunity to thank all the people in Northumberland-Quinte West who came out on October 10 and supported me personally, plus this government, with another majority. It was a great campaign, the highest margin our riding has ever had. We had a great team. Obviously, the people who came out to vote liked the changes that we embarked on in 2003 and some of the changes, after we got elected in 2003, reflected on the ground. I'm going to talk about some of the things we were able to do as a government over the past four years. Really, it is building the foundation as we move forward for the next four years. We certainly learned certain things to move forward.

For example, we had a couple of hospitals in the riding—well, one specifically. Actually, it's in the Minister of Agriculture's riding, but it services my riding as well, the Belleville General Hospital. It was delivered three rubber cheques for reconstruction.

Hon. John Wilkinson: The Tories' IOUs.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Well, I'm not sure they were IOUs. But I tell you, the building is going up.

They also got a much-anticipated MRI machine, which they're going to put in their brand new hospital, the addition.

On December 22 last year, I was able to announce in Cobourg, for the new Northumberland hospital, an MRI machine they never had. Today, I had the opportunity to cut a shiny red ribbon. It's working less than a year after we announced it. The people in the riding of Northumberland recognize that.

In the riding in general, under our Best Start program, we had 199 new daycare spaces. Do you know what? They're all funded by the province—no municipal participation.

I'm going to talk about some of the individual municipalities. I have only 10 minutes; I thought I had 10 hours. But anyway, I will try to make it through this because my good friend from Ottawa Centre, whom I'm going to share my time with, is going to speak after me. I should have said that at the beginning—a new member and a great member.

In the municipality of Brighton, which happens to be my home, the very first family health team was opened. Do you know what? In just a little bit over two years in operation, about 4,000 fewer are orphan patients in that community. We invested over \$2 million for refurbishing a building to house a new OPP station, right in the community, that serves east Northumberland.

I'm just going to touch on a couple of things we did in each municipality. Just east of Brighton is the municipality of Quinte West, home of CFB Trenton, one of the largest air bases in Canada. We're honoured to have that. They're a great employer. With the announcement we made just this week to support the families of military folks, it's very well received. Why other governments in the past never thought of that, I don't know, but I'm delighted we're able to do that for those families in much need.

At the Trenton Memorial hospital, about a year and a half ago we delivered a CT scanner. They never had one before. It's fine that they have a CT scanner, but here's one of the things the radiologist told me that day when we cut the ribbon, a red ribbon: Having that CT scanner at the memorial hospital saves about a thousand ambulance trips for patients to go from that hospital to another hospital—a thousand ambulance trips a year. That's three a day.

Interjection.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: You should know that—my good friend Mr. Wilkinson's father is Rotary International president.

Mr. Speaker, those are a couple of things in the east end of my riding.

Interjection: We want to hear about Brighton.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: You missed that. I did it already.

Let me talk about the investments we made in Port Hope. That other government—I won't even mention their name—closed the hospital there. They lost their hospital. Those folks in Port Hope were devastated—devastated. They closed the hospital. What did we do? Within a year or a year and a half of forming government, our Minister of Health, Minister Smitherman, delivered a brand new community health centre, fully

funded by this province, including capital funding of close to \$3 million, and we're going to pay ongoing operational expenses of somewhere between \$1.5 million and \$2.5 million a year. Yes, they did not get another hospital, but they got a community health centre.

Under that government, schools in the community of Port Hope were falling apart. We had Howard Jordan Public School full of mould. We had to close part of it. Do you know what we're doing? We're building a brand new school—brand new. That school was so bad that you could not repair it anymore.

I'm delighted with the investments we've been able to make in our community, and I know that the people of Northumberland–Quinte West are going to look on this newly elected government, in their second mandate, to keep on the track we've embarked on.

Let me talk about Cobourg, one of the most beautiful beaches on the north shore of Lake Ontario.

Mr. Mike Colle: The Sunshine Coast.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: You're right. It is the Sunshine Coast. Victoria Park—just in the last year, this government helped the local community on the multi-million dollar revitalization of their waterfront. The folks in Cobourg were delighted that we helped them achieve their goal of rebuilding their waterfront. There's a beach right in downtown Cobourg.

Mr. Mike Colle: The yacht club.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: The best yacht club between Toronto and Kingston. I'm going to use an expression that the warden normally uses: "We're the centre of the universe."

I don't want to offend anybody else in this House, but we are. Don't feel bad. I do like Scarborough and east Toronto when I drive by. But, I tell you, Northumberland is a hidden treasure. Along the corridor, we've got water, we've got rail and we've got the 401.

We have very, very vibrant tourism activities with Presqu'île Park in Brighton. In Quinte West, we have the mouth of the Trent Canal, the gateway to the canal system; and in Port Hope—I cannot emphasize the history enough—the downtown with its unique boutiques is truly a treasure.

I was delighted to be re-elected to keep my communities vibrant, and I know we're going to do that. At this time, I'm going to turn this over to my good friend from Ottawa Centre.

1630

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: It is a privilege to rise today to speak to the speech from the throne. I would like to take this occasion to highlight two big reasons I am present in this House as MPP for Ottawa Centre.

First, I would like to acknowledge the wisdom, courage and sacrifice of my parents, Anwar and Qaisar Naqvi, who are with us today in the members' gallery. Like many parents, they sought the best for their children: to grow and live in a safe and prosperous environment. But most importantly, they instilled in me the value of public service.

In particular, I want to thank my father for the sacrifices he made in the pursuit of democracy in his native country. I'm not sure if, while languishing in prison for nine months as a political prisoner, he envisioned that one day his son would be a legislator in the best province of this great country. Sir, you inspired me, and I salute and thank you for your wisdom and courage.

I would also like to acknowledge the people of Ottawa Centre, my community where I live, work and volunteer. It is because of their trust in me and in this government that I am here today, and I thank them for it. I'm humbled by the tremendous opportunity to advocate for their ideas, hopes and dreams at Queen's Park.

Ottawa is one of Canada's fastest growing cities, and Ottawa Centre is its heart, a diverse riding with diverse needs. Walk through its neighbourhoods, from the Arts Court near Parkdale Market to Bank Street, from Westboro to the Glebe, and will you learn that more people rent their homes than own them; safe streets are not a reality for everyone; our neighbours are mainly first- and second-generation Canadians; we primarily walk, bike or use public transit rather than own a car; and we appreciate the green spaces and walking trails that link our neighbourhoods together. So I will work for more affordable housing and the defence of tenants' rights, for more assistance and support of our police services, for more opportunities for new Canadians who come to our province, and for a greener community.

In this riding, where over 60 languages are spoken, one voice is loud and clear: It calls for respect, hope and inclusiveness. It is a voice that asks us to lift people up, not weigh them down; to find solutions, not harp on problems; to build bridges, not walls; and to defend public health care, public transportation and public education.

During the campaign and over the past four years, Premier McGuinty and his team worked hard to earn the support of Ottawa residents by investing almost \$620 million into our eastern Ontario schools, including hiring over 400 new teachers in Ottawa; investing over \$500 million on hospital capital projects in the Ottawa area, including hiring 116 new full-time nurses; and investing over \$82 million for transit-related infrastructure in the Ottawa area. I will continue to ensure progress in these areas for the people of Ottawa Centre.

I will work with the McGuinty government by continuing to improve the education funding formula by investing an additional \$3.1 billion annually in education by 2011 and requiring that the formula be reviewed by 2010; further reducing wait times for emergency room visits, children's surgery and general surgery, all the while hiring 9,000 new nurses and ensuring access to a family doctor for 500,000 more Ontarians; and working with our federal and municipal partners towards the creation of an effective transit system in Ottawa.

I am pleased to be a part of our government's green initiatives, including Move Ontario 2020. I'm proud Ontarians are leading the way in turning environmental

threats into opportunities to create the next generation of green technology.

I'm most excited about our government's commitment to poverty reduction with a strategy that includes fully implementing the Ontario child benefit and providing more affordable housing.

I would be remiss if I did not remind members of this honourable chamber that none of this can be accomplished without a strong and prosperous economy. That is why our government will continue to strengthen the economy by keeping taxes competitive, at the same time as we work with business and labour to create good, high-paying jobs. Through initiatives such as the next generation jobs fund, our government will support innovation and jobs of the future, and through the new \$165-million Ontario venture capital fund.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, communities become better when we work together. They become more livable, greener, safer, more tolerant and prosperous—in a word, sustainable. Members on all sides of this Legislature share the belief that communities become stronger when we seek collective solutions. I look forward to collaborating with all members to achieve great accomplishments for our neighbours, our communities and our province.

As I sat here listening to the Honourable Lieutenant Governor last week, I felt moments of awe, pride and weightiness at the challenge that lies before us all. I'm in awe of the tradition that surrounds us, years of rules and customs which make our democracy a strong one. I am proud of the province and country we live in. I am challenged by the enormous responsibility of public service. However, it is a challenge I'm pleased to take up, as I believe the best days of our country, our province and Ottawa are ahead of us, not behind us.

During my term in office, I will seek solutions for problems that span jurisdictions, working with Ottawa city councillors, my federal counterpart, as well as community associations, business groups, multicultural societies and other volunteer organizations in Ottawa Centre. I believe in the power of collaborative action. Throughout my term as an MPP, I promise to work hard and tirelessly to serve the people of Ottawa Centre.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Hon. Jim Watson: Just a quick word of congratulations to my new colleague and my neighbour, the honourable member from Ottawa Centre. You can tell by his passion and dedication that he is going to be a great member of provincial Parliament and parliamentary assistant. I wish him the very best over the next four years.

The member from Ottawa Centre joins a great group of men and women who, along with the Premier, are part of the eastern Ontario Liberal caucus. We're very proud of the accomplishments we have made in Ottawa and eastern Ontario. I just wanted to highlight a couple of those that are highlighted in general terms in the speech

from the throne, specifically in my riding of Ottawa West–Nepean.

I'm very pleased that next month we're going to be opening three new operating rooms at the Queensway Carleton Hospital to shorten wait times. The cancer centre is expanding, and they're going to be putting in a satellite operation at the Queensway Carleton Hospital as well as at the main centre at the Ottawa general hospital. This is a substantial investment in eastern Ontario to reduce wait times for chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

Highway 417, which serves all parts of eastern Ontario, is being expanded in the west end. For the first time in eastern Ontario, high-occupancy vehicle lanes are going to be included to encourage people to carpool, from an environmental point of view.

The money that we have contributed to the city of Ottawa has been significant and substantial. In just last year's budget, \$60 million went to the city of Ottawa. We're putting more money in transit through the gas tax. We're investing in social housing. I was pleased to be with Lynn Carson and others at Nepean Housing, where we opened new housing units behind Ben Franklin Place at Centrepointe.

It's a record we can all be proud of. We want to do more and we will do more for eastern Ontario in the years ahead.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to join the comments with respect to the statements made by the member from Northumberland–Quinte West as well as the member from Ottawa Centre. Congratulations, both of you, on your election as well as on your sincerity in your remarks and your commitment to work with your constituents.

What's most disappointing, however, is the fact that if you listened to the throne speech, there were a lot of things missing, a lot of things that were outlined during the election but somehow escaped the notice of the composers of the speech from the throne.

The current talk about hospitals is a good place to start. We had questions in the House today on the issues around Brampton Civic Hospital. We had questions today on the Sarnia hospital and, more importantly, in my riding of Durham, the unresolved issue of the ongoing deficit at Lakeridge Health. The GTA/905 Healthcare Alliance, clearly an independent, arm's-length agency, has stated there is over \$250 per person less for the people who live in that part of the province of Ontario. It's simply unfair. Nothing that I've heard in the throne speech or from the Minister of Health will address that.

Even more locally, in the community of Uxbridge, with the Uxbridge Cottage Hospital, it's well known by the minister from my remarks with him and those of the previous member who represented that area that there is the real serious situation of a doctor shortage: no anaesthesiologist, not the minimums they need to operate an effective hospital and primary care. They need an alternative payment plan to deal with the emergency room situation.

1640

There are a lot of things missing from the throne speech, and certainly I'm looking forward to the member from our caucus, Mr. Yakabuski's, remarks to bring some clarity to what's missing. It's fine to talk all the time about the promises made. I'm more interested, really, in the promises that are kept, and that's what we should keep our eye on: Don't make promises you don't intend to keep.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments? The member from southwest—Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I love the southwest; it's nice and warm.

Anyway, I want to take this opportunity as well to congratulate both speakers today, the member from Northumberland–Quinte West and the member from Ottawa Centre, who made his first remarks today. They were excellent and well taken to heart. I think both were striving towards the same point in their comments, and that is that this throne speech is about hope: hope for all people of Ontario, hope for the future and hope for a better Ontario for all of us. We heard from both speakers about how they came, and in particular the member from Ottawa Centre, how he came from a different country and his father had to go through various experiences and now there are opportunities here which were not available elsewhere.

I think it's exceptional that here in this throne speech we're going to continue on a platform that we started four years ago towards a better education system, towards a better health care system, towards improving the quality of our water and our environment and continuing to focus on the things that are important to all people here in Ontario: to continue to provide job opportunities for people here, to continue to help those who are most vulnerable in our society, the seniors in our society, and to provide them with things that they need, the health care and the services that they need and the tax breaks that they need.

This throne speech and the comments made today by both members encompassed those particular areas. We want a more prosperous Ontario, we want to see prosperity and help for all and, above all, we want to see hope for all. The comments by both members today, I think, clearly indicated that we are moving in the right direction.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

Mr. Ted Arnott: Congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, on your assumption of the role of Deputy Speaker in this Legislature. I certainly look forward to working with you.

I want to respond briefly to the comments that were made by the members for Northumberland–Quinte West and Ottawa Centre. We heard from the member for Northumberland–Quinte West in the previous provincial Parliament, so this wasn't his maiden speech, but it was certainly an interesting offering to this House this

afternoon. Certainly, the member for Ottawa Centre should be congratulated on his election. His comments today in his maiden speech were made in a very sincere way and are, I know, ones that are endorsed by many members of this House.

For my part, I'm really looking forward to the comments by the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who is waiting in the wings for our party. He's going to be bringing forward some of the concerns he heard in his riding during the course of the election campaign. When I was canvassing in Wellington–Halton Hills during the election campaign, I heard a great deal of concern from people—huge numbers of concerns—with respect to the administration of the provincial government here for the last four years. I was very pleased to be returned by the people of Wellington–Halton Hills to represent them, but at the same time I recognize that the Liberal Party has been re-elected. We congratulate them on their re-election and we look forward to working with them, but we will be continuing to do our job in opposition, to ensure that they are honest with the people of Ontario, that we can hold their feet to the fire in terms of accountability in this Legislature.

My colleague the member for Durham has reminded me again of the need to encourage the government to do more to support municipalities with their infrastructure needs. In Wellington–Halton Hills there are a number of municipalities that have huge infrastructure issues that they are coming to me with, seeking my support to bring those concerns forward in the Ontario Legislature, to ask the provincial government to review them, assess them and hopefully to assist us with these infrastructure needs in our small communities in the riding of Wellington–Halton Hills. I look forward to doing that over the next four years and I look forward to, hopefully, a positive and appropriate response from the government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Ottawa Centre: two minutes to respond.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I would first like to thank members from Ottawa West–Nepean, Durham, Scarborough Southwest, and Wellington–Halton Hills for their comments.

In conclusion, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank the members of Ottawa Centre, the community groups I have worked with over the years, for giving me this opportunity to serve them here at Queen's Park and to work on the constituents' needs over the years. I look forward to the opportunity of working with all the members here in the chamber, and serving the province as a whole.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to join the debate on the throne speech on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus.

First of all, I want to congratulate all 107 successful members on their election to the House here on October 10, and I want to pay particular attention to the 17 new members: 11 members of the government caucus, four

members of the Progressive Conservative caucus and two new members for the NDP. I want to congratulate each and every one of them. I know we share many of the same ideals as to why we come here and what we hope to accomplish while we are here.

Then, I want to thank the voters of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for re-electing me as their representative here. As you know, I was elected in 2003 in a riding that had been held by the other party with one of the smallest margins of victory in the province—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): You know, I have trouble hearing the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, because he speaks so softly, so I would appreciate your co-operation.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I have heard that in the past, that you have trouble hearing me. Members on the opposite side said they have trouble listening to me.

Again, we had one of the smallest margins of victory in 2003, which left us a great deal of work to do in our riding and accomplish in the four years. I want to thank those people for honouring me with their support in 2007 and returning me to this Legislature. I continue to pledge to work on their behalf, as I have for the past four years.

The throne speech—you know, we hear these members of the government talk about their plans and their aspirations and what wonderful things are in store for Ontario. They're so proud and so anxious and so enthused about their plan that it took them until November 29 to deliver this throne speech. Why so long? You know, the people of Ontario, we're in a crisis in this province, and this government took until November 29 to deliver their throne speech.

I understand that in 2003, when there was a change of government and there was a new Premier, he had to bring in his wife to pick out the new drapes for the Premier's office and all of that kind of stuff. We understand that it took a little while to get down to brass tacks. But here in 2007, November 29, Thursday past, the throne speech is delivered and the House gets down to real business only this past Monday. If you're really anxious, proud and enthusiastic about what you've got to offer the province of Ontario, we should have been to work much sooner.

Interjection: Mike Harris was months coming back.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That election was in June. You might want to remember, member for Essex, that that election was in June, and there normally is a recess after that. Anyhow—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Order. Let's have some order. Member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Let's talk about the throne speech. Where do we want to start? Let's start with page 1, when they talk about supporting our military families. Let's talk about supporting our military families. They did bring in legislation, which was unanimously approved by all parties. What have they accomplished

with that? They've eliminated the waiting period for OHIP and they have assured the jobs of reservists when they're deployed. Most employers already honoured that convention.

1650

What this government has failed to do, and something that we've been pressing for since they introduced that health tax in 2005, is—okay, you want to talk about supporting people in our military, the brave men and women who defend our interests around the world? Why are you still charging those enlisted people the health tax? They do not get their health care from the provincial government. It is paid for entirely by the federal government. This is the only jurisdiction in Canada, of the jurisdictions that charge either a health care premium or a tax, that does not exempt members of the military or members of the RCMP. Why only in the province of Ontario do you continue to insult those in our military, the enlisted men and women, those brave people who defend us around the world? Why do you continue to insult them by charging that punitive tax? That is something you should have been addressing.

Let's talk about something else in the throne speech. The McGuinty government talks about a commitment to redevelop 35,000 long-term-care beds in the province of Ontario over the next 10 years. The member for Northumberland-Quinte West wanted to talk about the last four years. Well, for a moment I'll talk about the last four years. What did you do to redevelop B and C beds in this province in the last four years? Zippo. Nothing.

Hon. John Wilkinson: We had to get those D beds.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The D beds were redeveloped under the past government; 20,000 D beds were redeveloped under the past government. So now we have a commitment by this government to redevelop 35,000 B and C beds in the province of Ontario and not a word about the funding that's going to be required. What long-term care got out of this government in their first four years was less support than any government in this province's history. What they got was a cornucopia of all kinds of regulations without the money to support and allow them to implement them.

Interjection: Spell that for us.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I could, but I only have 20 minutes. Did you want it done phonetically as well?

So no support for long-term care and a vague commitment that they want to redevelop 35,000 beds across this province in the next 10 years: That's the kind of stuff that's in this throne speech, all kinds of fluffy stuff. Is somebody going to be opposed to that? Of course they're not going to be opposed to that. But has this government made the commitment to actually do the things that will make that possible, that will allow that to happen? No.

Then recently we have the reverend flap. Can I say "reverend" in here? Can I say "holy"? Can I say "God"? Apparently I can say any of those.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The member for Peterborough is saying that they got that resolved. I sent the Minister of

Transportation a letter around a month ago on this subject. You'd have to believe that the McGuinty government sent some new marching orders down to the star chamber that any kind of a plate that has any kind of a religious or spiritual connotation on it: "Shut her down, Louis. No plate; can't approve it." That had to come from the Premier's office.

So now sane people across this province, reasonable people, are building all kinds of pressure and putting all kinds of pressure on the Premier, and the poor Minister of Transportation—in a way I feel a bit sorry for him because I know all the orders come out of the Premier's office. So I was feeling a little bit of sympathy for the Minister of Transportation, who was new in that portfolio—a man with a lot of experience in this House but new in that portfolio. He was getting all kinds of pressure from wise and reasonable people around this province, myself and Mr. O'Toole included. What was he going to do about this?

What could somebody find offensive about the letters R-E-V? Simply said, they say "REV"; it could stand for "revving," it could stand for "reverend," and they shut it down. One of the logics was, "Well, no, it might get somebody to rev up their cars too fast and drive dangerously." But then they went back to the religious thing. But, Holy Hannah, this morning the Premier said, when the cameras were rolling and the newspapers and the scribes were out there with their pens—he's good at this because he wants people to just forget about it—"Oh well, sometimes we do silly things in government." He puts on this pretend mea culpa, but now we find out that he's kind of changed his mind, but kind of not. They're going to grandfather those that already have them, but people like Reverend Ingrid Condie-Bennett, my constituent, whom I went to bat for in the first place and brought this issue to Mr. Bradley's attention, is not going to get her plate. Now they're going to have to review and check the criteria one more time. We'll be here, ensuring that that issue gets fair hearing.

I heard one of the members talking about tourism. This is the logic of the McGuinty government: In the lead-up time to the election, you couldn't turn a television on in this province without being inundated with Tourism Ontario ads paid for with your tax dollars. These were directed at the people in Ontario; they weren't being shown in New York state or Pennsylvania or Ohio or overseas. No, they were being shown to the people of Ontario, preaching to the people who already live here, with your tax dollars. It was nothing but a feel-good kind of story, paid for by the taxpayers of Ontario, to try to further the Liberals' chances of re-election. But now that the election is over and we really do need some input and support for the tourism industry because of our dollar, because Canadians, and Ontarians in particular, are now going to the United States to spend their tourism dollar because they get more bang for the buck, do you see any ads on TV? No, they've been re-elected.

They're spending money on other things, like creating a job for the ex-Minister of Transportation, who was

turfed out of cabinet, and he was so angry that he was going to cause problems. So Mr. McGuinty, the Premier, created a new job for him. He's going to travel around and do some kind of fancy work about saving jobs in the province after costing jobs for the past four years. That's what we are going to be spending our money on—no more tourism ads. We could be trying to bring people into Ontario and keep people in Ontario so they're not spending money in the States with the higher Canadian dollar, but no, we don't see those ads on television anymore.

1700

Waste diversion: That was a big, big issue for the McGuinty Liberals in 2003. They were going to have 60% waste diversion. Their whole environmental record—60% waste diversion; they never even got 40%. It's a joke. That was an ironclad promise that they failed to deliver on.

They talk about their coal promise. Well, they went from 2007, as the leader of the NDP, Mr. Hampton, said; then another throne speech said 2009. This throne speech doesn't even say 2014, although that's the plan. They've got this so-called commitment, and then what do they do? They give money to Dofasco to convert their blast furnaces from natural gas to pulverized coal. That's what the McGuinty government does. So we're shutting down coal, but here they go and they give a grant to Dofasco to convert blast furnaces that run on natural gas to coal. That's their commitment to the environment. There just never was any commitment to the environment.

In fact, the former Minister of the Environment wanted to build a massive garage—they called it the “garage mahal”—to house all of her cars and didn't see anything wrong with it. Finally, when community groups were so incensed that they said, “Uh-uh, we are not standing for this,” and she was under a great deal of pressure and, I can assure you, orders from the Premier's office, she withdrew that application. Then when it came time for the cabinet to be selected this time around, Mr. McGuinty said to the former Minister of the Environment, “Here's your sign. Flick off.” That's what he said.

Hon. Jim Watson: Not funny.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Nobody's laughing, I know.

And where is the Flick Off campaign that you spent half a million dollars on? Where is it? What did you do with it? You were so embarrassed by it that you buried it. You spend money, and when it is a joke and ridiculous, you try to bury it. That's what this government was up to, but nobody wanted to talk about that during the election campaign.

Let's talk about the economy and jobs. Their commitment to jobs in this province amounts to, depending upon whose numbers you're looking at, between 160,000 and 175,000 jobs lost under this government's leadership in the manufacturing sector alone. And what does the Premier do? He blames it on outside forces, he blames it on global competition, he blames on it the federal government, he blames it on the dollar, but he doesn't accept any of the blame himself. That's not leadership.

You can't, on one hand, feel that you can just slough it off like the licence plate issue by getting up there and saying, “Oh, sometimes we do silly things in government,” and hope that people will just forget about it and forgive you, and on the other hand, when you do have a serious problem as a result of your economic policies which you have failed to address—you even passed a resolution in the previous Parliament to deal with that and didn't follow up on it—you can't then blame everybody but yourself for all of the problems that you're experiencing. That is not leadership.

In the forestry sector, a tremendous, as the Premier might call it, contraction, but we're losing jobs and we are struggling. What do we have the McGuinty government come out with last year? They bring out a report from the Ontario Parks board that was going to cripple the economy of areas like mine that rely so heavily on the forestry business and forestry industry. The then Minister of Natural Resources threw up his hands and said, “Well, we haven't really had a chance to look at this.” But it was he who appointed the people to the board, it was he who gave the direction to the board as to what to come up with. He knew what he was going to get beforehand.

I'm running out of time, unfortunately, but that's an issue we will be able to touch on at a later date. This throne speech is nothing but fluff, no substance for the people of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Hon. John Wilkinson: It's good to see you back here, Mr. Speaker.

You know, friends, I am delighted to be back here representing the new riding of Perth–Wellington. It was so good to hear from my friend the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, and I want to congratulate him. But you know who he didn't mention in all of his comments? And do you know who the opposition have not mentioned, not even once since they got back to this place? A man who ran on a platform of “leadership matters”—my God, leadership shatters under pressure. I am talking about one John Tory. I have not heard that man's name mentioned here, the leader of your party.

Interjection.

Hon. John Wilkinson: Yes, there is a meeting tonight; yes, that's very important.

And so we talk about, as I say, the leaders who have no names. I want to say to my friend Monte Kwinter—it's wonderful that he has that new position, because he replaces one Ernie Eves. I haven't heard Ernie Eves' name mentioned by the opposition recently. I haven't heard them talk about that. I wonder why? Oh yes, he lost that election.

Now we're back here. I remember this party going on, crowing about the fact that they had this man of impeccable leadership quality. And what did he do? He led you over the cliff. I want to say to my good friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, you did a magnificent job, sir, of winning a magnificent plurality in your riding despite what your leader did to you.

Now I want to talk about the leadership hopefuls who have no name. As I say to my friend Mr. Yakabuski, I hear perhaps that position is going to be open. I look across. I know other Johns in this place, Mr. O'Toole, for example. Mr. Arnott, who I have greatest respect for, my neighbour—I think that job may be coming open, because as long as you won't even mention your leader's name in this House, I think it shows to all of us that that position is going to be open quite soon. Leadership shatters under pressure.

Mr. John O'Toole: I always stay here to listen to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who's always entertaining and always informed. He does bring a real grassroots approach to it because he does, as his plurality indicates, stand up for his constituents very effectively and very strongly.

What this government is failing to respond to are the real, underlying fundamental concerns of each and every one of us here. It's the contraction in the economy itself, and it's symbolized most importantly in the manufacturing sector which affects my riding of Durham. I think of the families as they move toward Christmas and the imminent layoff of over 1,200 people just at the General Motors complex in Oshawa; many of them who actually live in Peterborough, I am sure, will be affected. This affects families.

Let's not trivialize how important and how meaningful this really is. All the other inside things we talk about aren't really that important when it comes to our main responsibility of dealing with people, with their lives, their families and the state of the economy and opportunity.

The aging population and long-term care was mentioned by Mr. Yakabuski. All of us know people and, indeed, our own family members, whom I've often spoken about right here in the Legislature—our concern is, will there be a place for them in long-term care? Will it be up to a standard of today, that they'll get safe and appropriate cordial treatment? Having the right tools to do that job for the workers in those facilities is very important.

They're not talking about the real issues. When we talked about the restriction in the auto sector, I remember that the Premier's response at that time was that it was a minor contraction. This isn't a minor contraction, and now the new Minister of Revenue, I believe, called those people worried about layoffs crybabies. Let's bring this to a higher level of trying to find solutions. As Minister of Revenue, she should take a more ministerial approach to these things. The more recent issue of uncertainty in the economy is asset-backed commercial paper. I don't think we're getting all the answers. That's what you should be talking about.

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Mr. Jeff Leal: It's always a pleasure to listen to my good friend the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke provide his comments about the throne speech. When I look at our throne speech, I see a real plan for the

future that's being laid out in detail for the next number of years for the province of Ontario.

I've always had great respect for my friend from Durham; he got his common sense because he was born in Peterborough. I know many members of his family extremely well, and I count upon them as my great supporters in the riding of Peterborough and appreciate his family members.

But it's interesting, when we start talking about manufacturing jobs, where the federal Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty, has been. He's been missing in action. When people go to the federal Finance Minister with some positive suggestions to help municipalities cope with the downloaded burden that was placed upon them by Mr. Harris and Mr. Eves in 1997-98, he says, "I can't help municipalities because we're not in the jurisdiction to help municipalities." What a cop-out.

By investing in municipalities, keeping our municipalities strong in the province of Ontario—Mr. Speaker, you know, coming from the riding of Essex, that they're an engine of growth. Strong municipalities lead to a healthy Ontario. I'm begging the federal government to come to the table soon to help our municipal partners to deliver that economic base that is so needed in Ontario today. We can do part of the job; we're willing to do part of job. But we need the federal government to help us in that role to assist municipalities.

Look at the redistribution, where they're going to shortchange Ontario. We're here over the next number of weeks to stand up for the interests of Ontario. We'll be introducing a resolution on the Ontario seats next week. We're here to stand up for Ontario, and I want to hear more from the opposition besides going to a meeting tonight in Rosedale.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to compliment the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on his powerful speech this afternoon and also to congratulate him on his re-election to the Legislature with such a strong plurality—I've heard this today. I don't know what the plurality was, but maybe you could enlighten us in your response—

Interjection: The largest in Ontario.

Mr. Ted Arnott: The largest in Ontario. That's something to be very, very proud of, especially in the face of what was admittedly a difficult election for our party, which the member for Perth–Wellington pointed out to us. Certainly, for my part, I am proud to be part of a party that's led by John Tory, the future MPP—we're not sure for which riding, but I look forward to his assuming a seat again in this House, and look forward to his continued leadership within our party and within our caucus in the coming months, and we're looking forward to the election in 2011.

One issue that was not adequately raised in the throne speech, in my opinion, was municipal infrastructure. We've heard fed-bashing from government members on a number of occasions now, trying to suggest that the federal government should come to the table and provide more money for municipal infrastructure. It would be my

hope that the provincial government makes it a higher priority. I'm glad that the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal is here to acknowledge the fact that there is a huge infrastructure challenge in many communities across the province of Ontario; I alluded to this earlier in my remarks a few minutes ago. Certainly, these are issues that need to be addressed immediately by the provincial government.

We need to hear about a greater commitment from the provincial government on the infrastructure issue in the upcoming fall economic statement. I would challenge the Minister of Finance to consider that fact. In discussions with my municipal councils in Wellington-Halton Hills, this is repeatedly brought up, and we need to ensure that there is a basic level of infrastructure in our communities. Without the support of the provincial government, we just can't afford to do what needs to be done, whether it's in the area of municipal bridges, whether it's in the area of sewer and water or in a number of other areas where we need greater provincial support. I would encourage that from this government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Response?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the Minister of Research and Innovation and the members from Durham, Peterborough and Wellington-Halton Hills for their comments in response to my comments.

I want to get back to an issue that I couldn't really finish up on, and that was the Algonquin Park issue. We now see that issue rearing its ugly head again. The Minister of Natural Resources—granted, she has not been in the post for very long, so I cut her a little slack. But it's an issue that is going to have to be dealt with, because those people who don't understand the importance of logging in Algonquin Park are going to continue to try to see it stopped. They don't understand that we have a healthier park because it's harvested: fewer forest fires, less disease. Less than 2% of that park can be forested at any given time. That's already the situation.

What we have on the Ontario Parks board—and those people were appointed by the former Minister of Natural Resources; all but one person on that board was appointed by him. They already had a bent that they were going to do everything they could to shut down logging in Algonquin Park. They don't care about the economic impacts. They don't care about the social impacts to communities that surround the park. They only care about getting their way. They're not interested in the counter argument. What we ask the Minister of Natural Resources is to get some balance into the equation. You don't bring out a report that shuts down an industry like that without at least talking to the industry and making them part of the discussions. There's much to be done in this regard, and this government needs to open its mind on that issue.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I have to say, it's really good to be back. I enjoy this place very, very much. I want to

welcome the citizens of Ontario to this political forum and I pay tribute to them. By the way, it's 5:17, live. I pay tribute to the citizens who watch this political channel, because without them, this would be meaningless. As you know, there are only a couple of people who listen in this place. The ones who really listen are the citizens watching, so I pay tribute to you, regulars of this political forum. And to those citizens who might have missed the throne speech, don't worry; you didn't miss much. You didn't miss a thing.

I'm here to talk about a couple of things that matter to me, obviously, and that I think matter to a whole lot of people. The first thing I want to talk about is post-secondary education. Those of you in this Legislature, the Liberals in particular, would know that what you gave to the post-secondary sector is \$300 for books. They're all so happy about that.

Applause.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Especially the new ones, because they have to do that, right? But they will learn. As soon as they go on that side, they stop clapping. But that's what they have to do.

Three hundred dollars for books: Those Liberal members who've got children in university would probably know, depending on the field they're in—my son is in business, God bless. It's close to \$900 for books alone. And McGuinty—God bless his soul, a generous man—is giving him \$300. That is such a big deal. I've got to tell you, you Liberals have got to stand up in this place and say, "Man, we are giving you \$300." Be proud, say it loud, so that the students know how much help you're giving them, so that they can feel good, so that they can thank you for all the kindness, the largesse that the new minister is going to give these young people. Be proud of these announcements. Three hundred bucks—ha. Do you know, my fine Liberal friends on the other side and this side as well, that at U of T, just to be in a general course, it's \$5,300 for tuition fees alone, excluding books, for some of you who don't know, excluding residence, if you have to go to another place to study—5,300 bucks just to be in a general program.

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If you happen to be in a deregulated program, which the Tories did and which the Liberals continue to do—if you're in law at U of T, it's 18,000 to 19,000 bucks. God bless the Liberals; they think it's okay. By the way, if you are in pharmacy, I understand it's \$23,000 to \$26,000—deregulated by the Tories and continued by Liberals, and the Liberals seem to be happy about that. What do they give the students who are in these deregulated programs? Three hundred bucks for books—such largesse. We have to talk about it; be proud. The next speaker, who will be a Liberal: Stand up and talk about this great stuff you are doing.

The deregulated program in medicine: To be a doctor in this province—some of you good doctors probably know—is it \$18,000, \$19,000, \$20,000 a year? Good doctor, what's the debt once you get out? I hear it's about \$100,000, \$120,000. But don't worry, as Liberal

language goes, “They’ll be doctors; they’ll be able to pay it off: Good God, \$120,000 is not such a big debt. They’ll be able to pay it off—no problem.”

In the other fields, the general debt load is about \$25,000—generally. Some people have more. My daughter had a \$30,000 debt. She’s a teacher, paying it off ever so slowly, but that debt is never going away. But don’t worry: She’ll pay it off eventually, because that’s what it’s about. It’s not about government obligation; it’s about what people need to do for themselves, right?

Liberals, when they were in opposition, attacked that general concept because normally, at least, it’s a Conservative concept: the whole notion that you have to do it on your own. Forget about governments giving; it’s about you paying your own way and making your own way. As I say, when Liberals are in opposition, they fight just like New Democrats. When they get into government, they’re just like Tories. We all know it, it seems, but the good public seems to elect Liberals. They elected them again, so they must like you for some reason or other. I can’t for the life of me understand it, but they re-elected you.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Good doctor, I want to tell you as well that in Quebec, tuition fees are a maximum \$2,100 in all fields. There is no deregulation in Quebec. No program is deregulated, allowing universities to charge what they want. In Quebec, our nearest neighbouring province—French-speaking, in Canada—the highest tuition you pay is 2,100 bucks. “How could that be?” you ask.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: In Ontario, they’re paying \$4,000 more—

M. Rosario Marchese: Jean-Marc Lalonde, vous aurez la possibilité de parler après moi, s’il vous plaît. Prenez l’occasion de le dire. A \$2,100 maximum—no deregulation.

Often people say, “Let’s look at Europe.” There’s zero tuition in many European countries. But you don’t have to go to Europe; in fact, Canadians never go to Europe. They usually go to America, and they say, “Oh, my God, it’s worse there,” or, “It’s better there; we have to compete with them.” No. Let’s look at the province of Quebec. If the province of Quebec, which is a poorer province, can have such low tuition fees, why does Ontario have close to the highest tuition fees in the country? How do we tolerate it? Why do young people tolerate it? Why do the 80% of the public that says tuition fees are too high—every poll reveals that—support governments that continue to whack them year in and year out? McGuinty Liberals are going to whack students again next September with another 5% increase, and the year following, they’re going to get whacked again with another 5% increase.

Interjection.

M. Rosario Marchese: S’il vous plaît, je n’ai pas entendu.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Cinquante-deux mille personnes ont démenagé du Québec en Ontario.

M. Rosario Marchese: Et qu’est-ce que ça veut dire?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Ça veut dire que les avantages sont mieux—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell and the member for Trinity–Spadina, I feel a little left out of this conversation. It should come through the Chair.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Speaker, you understand that even if I’m not looking at you, I am always speaking through you. You know that; always.

So I say that if Quebec, a poor province, can do it, then we can do it. Something is wrong with this. How can Ontario be number nine in per capita funding for our post-secondary sector? One of the wealthiest provinces in Canada, and do you recall McGuinty saying we are moving to the general average, the median, the national average, that we’re getting to it, that we’re going to get to it at some point? They have never, ever got close to it and they’re getting further and further away. Why? No money; no pecunia. But if you hear the Premier say it, good God, they’re spending billions of dollars. We are, I remind you, good Liberals here and there. We are number nine in per capita funding. We pay the highest tuition fees in the country. We have the largest class sizes in the country. How can you Liberals be proud of the largest class sizes in the country?

Do you know what, mon ami Jean-Marc Lalonde? We have half of our professors in this province teaching on a part-time basis. Full-time load, mind you, but paid part-time. And half of the professors in our community colleges are part-time. Full load, part-time wages. How do you get the quality of education? Where do students go to get help because they’re not there? If you’re part-time and you’ve got to work a full load, and you’ve got to go to another college or university to teach, you’re not available to provide the help the students need. We are losing the quality that we desperately need.

If you listen to McGuinty or the education minister, they’re saying, “We’re investing billions and billions of dollars.” There is no evidence of it whatsoever. Did you miss something in the throne speech? Please, not much. Don’t bother looking it up. Don’t bother reading it. You haven’t missed a thing.

Talk about housing: 120,000 people in Ontario are desperately looking to get into Toronto public housing, if it’s in Toronto, or other public housing establishments outside of Toronto. There are 120,000 people waiting desperately to get in because they need help from the government.

If you recall, the Liberal Party in 2003 said they were going to build 20,000 units of affordable housing. When our leader pointed out that we’ve only created 283 units of affordable housing, the now minister of housing, Mr. Jim Watson, said, “Oh, that’s not true.” I refer the minister to his own facts, to his own civil servants and to any study. It will reveal that there are only 283 units that are affordable, and “affordable” means that it is under \$700, in terms of what people can afford. So what’s affordable? Anything that you have to pay, on the basis of what you earn, has to be below \$700. That’s what “affordable” is.

The government helped to build other units, but they're not for those who are on low income. They are not affordable. They include in "affordable" all sorts of units that are condominium as well and they give them an "affordable housing" label. Not true. This is language and this is where governments say things that are not entirely correct.

Speaking about housing, we have in Toronto a Toronto Community Housing Corp. which has 186,000 people living in them. They happen to be, for the most part, poor. There are only a few people who pay the market rent. The vast majority of people living at the Toronto Community Housing Corp., of the 186,000 people living in them—are poor. They had a campaign in Toronto where they visited a lot of the local MPPs and a lot of you made promises to them. I hope they're going to come and visit you again, because some of you in those meetings said, "Oh, of course we support your campaign"—you know, some of you met them. They said, "We need \$300 million to be able to repair that housing stock."

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Housing stock that's 30, 40, 50 years old, falling apart in most cases, where there is mould, where there is complete disrepair, where washrooms are not repaired, where ceilings are falling apart. They're waiting for you, Liberal government, to donate but one penny of the \$300 million that they're asking. You fine Liberals, who talk about how much you care for the poor, not one penny for that \$300-million campaign. You loving Liberals, you Liberals who want to deal with the party agenda, you who have poverty so close to your chest—not one cent has gone for that \$300-million campaign to help the poorest in our society, the poorest in Toronto.

But I tell you, it's not just people in Toronto. It's everywhere. I tell you this, good Liberal members, that bill is more than \$300 million. That bill, I estimate, is close to a billion dollars. And you, for four years, have done absolutely nothing to deal with that particular issue. I don't know what you can be proud of; I really don't.

Howard Hampton talked about the \$10 minimum wage. We think it should be given today. Liberals in their traditional way say, "We're going to roll it out in three years."

I'm going to talk about JK and SK in a moment and make some comments about that.

We want to talk about child care. You promised to spend \$300 million for child care. In four years, you've spent not one cent of the \$300 million. But you did spend \$20 million for child care two months preceding the last election. That's what you do. You don't spend. You wait until an election comes, then you spend some of that money and then you claim you've done so much for child care.

You Liberals know there are men and women with children who can't afford to stay home to watch their children, who have to go to work. Many of those people have nowhere to send their children. There is no adequate child care. A lot of this child care is unsupervised, in places where we know nothing about standards. So on

the child care front, you Liberals have done absolutely nothing in that regard.

On the download, you talk so strongly about how much you have a campaign to go after the federal government, and yes, you support the city's campaign to have one cent of the GST. Yet you abdicate your responsibility as a province about what you are going to do. Why don't you give one cent of your PST to the cities so they can deal with their infrastructure problems? Why don't you take responsibility for your own responsibilities, because cities are a responsibility of provinces. Instead of taking that on, instead of providing the funds for the cities, you are so happily engaged in attacking the federal government, as if that is enough by way of your responsibility.

You have, Speaker, and your friends, the fiscal tools to solve some of these social infrastructure questions. Do you think people are simply going to accept the fact that you have absolutely no responsibility and that by attacking the federal government you think you're going to escape your obligations? You're not.

Fiscal tools and powers mean you can raise the money to help cities, like the city of Toronto, that are in fiscal problems. Take one cent of your PST and help the city out. Help them with the TTC problems they've got. You should get back into sharing your responsibility for TTC. You should be paying half of your operating expenses for TTC. If you want people to get out of their cars, the city alone can't do it. You've got to pay the money to be able to build an infrastructure where you've got LRTs, where you've got buses, where you're able to expand your subway system and get people into transit and get them out of cars. If you, Liberal friends—I say from time to time—don't spend the money, this will not happen. Waiting for Harper to solve this—it will not happen. We cannot expect the federal Conservative government to help us in this regard. That's why I say to you that you have the responsibility to deal with this problem.

When it comes to full-time JK and SK, I remind the good citizens watching this program that the Liberals promised in 2003 to have full-time JK and SK. For four years they did absolutely nothing. Now they've promised it again. Now they've hired Mr. Pascal to study the matter. When he's coming back with a proposal is beyond me. With all due respect to Mr. Pascal—I don't know what he will recommend—I have absolutely no faith in this government in terms of what it might do or when it will do it.

Boards of education have deficits. Parents are raising \$560 million a year out of their own pockets because they desperately need to help their own schools. Kids who have a special-education problem are waiting, lingering, for special-ed support. They are not succeeding academically because you're not putting in the supports.

Now you've promised to put in full-time JK and SK, and you have absolutely no money to give. Where are you going to steal the money from to provide that program? Where are you going to steal the money from to provide this program when so much is wrong with our

public and Catholic education system, elementary and secondary?

I'm looking forward to debating these issues with you, good Liberals, in the next four years. I'm looking forward to talking to the citizens of Ontario in a little more detail. I'm looking forward to their coming into your offices and beating you up from time to time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments?

Hon. John Milloy: I'm pleased. This is the first opportunity I've had to speak in the House since the election. I congratulate all my colleagues for coming in.

As the new minister, I listened with great interest to my friend from Trinity–Spadina and all his comments, but particularly those related to post-secondary education. Those of us who listened to his speech would know he had a bit of a theme when he talked about post-secondary education. He talked about the whole theme of saying one thing in opposition and another in government. I think it's sort of an interesting theme when it comes to post-secondary education because anyone who spent any time in this House or on the election trail will know about our fine friends, the New Democratic Party. We know about their support for post-secondary education, and we know about their support for students—when they're in opposition. But when the NDP were in government they campaigned on a promise to freeze tuition rates in the province. I remember that. Actually, they campaigned on the same one.

But let me ask you—and I ask if perhaps the member can respond. When he got into power, they in fact increased tuition fees by 50%. The NDP, who cared so much for post-secondary education when they were in opposition, they got into power to care about students and do you know what they did? They cut, they eliminated up-front grants for students. The New Democratic Party, which talks about the importance of post-secondary education in opposition, got into power and they cut funding for our province's colleges and universities.

I'm part of a government that introduced several years ago the \$6.2-billion Reaching Higher plan, which had in it \$1.5 billion for student assistance. In the recent speech from the throne, we outlined a number of initiatives to further help students access post-secondary education. I am proud of those commitments, and I'm proud of our government's record, especially when compared to the NDP in government.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm always pleased to respond to the ever-passionate member from Trinity–Spadina. I have great confidence in his ability to support and advocate for education at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary level. He does an excellent job of pointing out the failures of this government. In fact, when you talk about promises and opportunity, he is a good watchman, if you will, and will hold their feet to the fire. I feel some responsibility as the transportation critic to point out just one, in the brief time I have. I couldn't compare my passion for education with the member from Trinity–Spadina, but there are a couple of important facts.

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One thing they keep putting on the table here is the over \$17 billion in the Move Ontario plan, but the people of Ontario should know that not one thin dime of that money will be spent in the near term. In fact, it's a plan that dates to two elections ago—an unconscionable expectation out there but no deliverables in the four years that they've been mandated to serve, except the good words.

In fact, if you look at even the fundamentals of the economy, some of my research shows that all five of the major banks and the conference board have slashed the projection for 2008 growth since the Ontario budget, with declines ranging from 0.6 to 1.3 percentage points. This represents billions of dollars of lost revenue.

Ontario is going to be dead last in this great country Canada: once the leader, now the trailer. It just isn't matching all of the commitments they're making. If their history is any predictor of the future, only look to the past to know the future behaviour. They've broken most of their commitments in the past four years, but the people of Ontario won't be fooled twice.

I can say to you now, let's keep an eye on this government and the promises they make. Let's make sure that they commit to a stronger Ontario and a fairer Ontario.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Does anybody have any doubt why this member from Trinity–Spadina was returned resoundingly by his constituents in that riding? The member is completely right on the mark when he reviews all of the matters which government has failed on over four years and raises the issue, rightly so, that the disappointments of the past four years are likely to be repeated; that notwithstanding the government's commitment on everything from poverty reduction to tuition fees, from dealing with child care and putting a child care system in place in this province to fixing the funding formula in the school systems, everyone knows they have not accomplished a darned thing.

So as we look forward to the next four years, we know that the member from Trinity–Spadina is going to be a very effective member of the opposition in making sure that the government's easy talk is backed up by action. And if it is not, we know that members like the member from Trinity–Spadina will be there at every turn holding the government's feet to the fire.

It's unfortunate that the opposition doesn't have more opportunities to actually congratulate the government, but the reality is that the disappointments are crushing. We come here to reflect what we hear in our communities, which is that the government is simply not delivering, has not delivered for four years. And we don't expect much difference.

What is that saying about a leopard not changing its spots? We know very well that we have many more disappointments ahead of us. They continue to have as their strategy blaming governments going back decades and decades, or blaming the federal government but never taking the responsibility of doing the things that

need to be done to bring Ontario up to par with other jurisdictions so that we can have not only a quality place to live for all families and all people but an opportunity for our children to succeed.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: I was listening very carefully to my dear friend from Trinity–Spadina. Let me tell you that I got an article here just today. There are 52,770 people from Quebec who moved to the province of Ontario in the last year. That shows that we are really in advance of any other province in Canada, that we are number one in education. When I look at the elementary schools especially, 82% to 84% of our classes in grade 3 and under have 20 or fewer pupils in the class. In Quebec you don't have that, my dear friend.

You were also saying that tuition fees are lower. Why is it that in the Outaouais area they're all crossing the river to go to La Cité collégiale? More than 50% of the students who go to La Cité collégiale are from Quebec. They're paying less in Ontario, my dear friend.

Let me tell you also that the people in Ontario know how well off they are to work in Ontario. When we came up with the labour mobility agreement with Quebec, all the contractors and construction people in Quebec were saying, "Oh, we wish we were in Ontario," and over 10,000 of them cross the river every day from Quebec to come and work in Ontario. That is the way we treat people from any province who want to come and work in Ontario, who want to come to Ontario to have their children educated, because we are well known to have the best education system. The McGuinty government said, in 2003, that our number one priority was education. That is exactly what we're doing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Response?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: As usual, I thank my friends and my foes. It's always interesting: When the Liberals comment on the NDP period of 1990, they often say, "The NDP spent too much." Simultaneously, concurrently, they say, "You didn't spend enough. You cut here, but you overspent in other areas and you've got a deficit." You can't win with the Liberals. They either say that you have big deficits or you get attacked for not spending enough. How can you win with that? Only Liberals can do that to me. God bless you.

Secondly, the minister of post-secondary education and training: Again, he's proud of his investment of \$6.2 billion. You would think that if you poured in \$6.2 billion, you would get at least marginally close to the national average. We are not close at all. You fine Liberals are number nine in Canada on per-capita funding. Do you understand what that means? You're not doing very well. You have the highest class sizes in the country. Do you know what that means? You're not doing very well. So you have to look at the facts. You can't simply say, "We're number one." You can't simply say, my friend from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, that the Premier made this a number one priority and therefore things are great. No, you've got to look at the facts. Tuition fees are the highest in the country. By the way, in

Quebec tuition fees are \$2,100. They lead in Canada in terms of social issues. They lead on child care with their \$7-a-day child care. They lead in terms of benefits to families in this country. Quebec leads in so many areas.

Please, we have nothing to be proud of. The throne speech that you delivered? Just chuck it away in the dustbin of history. There's nothing remarkable about it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate?

Hon. Jim Watson: It is a great pleasure to participate in this debate on the speech from the throne. I want to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Speaker, on your appointment and election today as Deputy Speaker—we look forward to working with you—and thanking all of the members, particularly the member from Kitchener–Conestoga, who led off the debate with such eloquence, and my colleague the honourable member from Ottawa Centre. One of the great things I've learned in the last couple of weeks, meeting our new colleagues who were elected for the first time, is the depth of talent and skill that these individuals bring to this chamber. I very much look forward to working with them in their communities and visiting many of their communities in my responsibilities as Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

I also want to take a moment to thank my constituents in Ottawa West–Nepean. I've had the pleasure of representing Ottawa West–Nepean since 2003, and I was deeply touched by their support of my candidacy, and the response I received as I went door to door. I think I lost—the Minister of Health Promotion will be happy to know this—about 12 pounds going door to door. It's one of the greatest diets one can go on. I very much appreciate that vote of confidence.

We have some wonderful neighbourhoods and communities in Ottawa West–Nepean. As I said earlier, I'm very proud of some of the accomplishments that we have worked on together, whether it's improving capacity and facilities at the Queensway Carleton Hospital, whether it's working at Algonquin College, which is located in my riding, to ensure that more young people have an opportunity for a post-secondary education, or whether it's working with the four city councillors who make up the riding of Ottawa West–Nepean: Alex Cullen, Rick Chiarelli, Gord Hunter and Maria McRae. We have a very positive working relationship with those councillors because, at the end of the day, we all share the same constituents and we have to be rowing in the same direction.

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I wanted to take an opportunity just to go through the speech from the throne and offer a couple of comments and perspectives from eastern Ontario and particularly from the city of Ottawa.

One of the first things that His Honour the Lieutenant Governor talked about was the important sacrifices that our men and women serving overseas are making on our behalf and in support of freedom around the world. I'm particularly proud that the first piece of legislation that was passed in this House—and I thank the opposition

members for their thoughtfulness and the speed of passage—was the legislation that will allow us to eliminate the 90-day waiting period for OHIP for family members of the military on bases like Trenton, where my colleague from Northumberland is from, or from Petawawa and those communities that have large military presences.

Also, the same bill dealt with leave for those members of the Armed Forces who are reservists, that they will be guaranteed that their job will be waiting for them after they come back from a mission, whether it's in Haiti or Afghanistan or Rwanda or some of the other places that our Armed Forces are serving in. And I want to pay tribute to our colleague the member for Ottawa-Orléans, because it was the member for Ottawa-Orléans who first pushed and pushed in our caucus and in the Legislative Assembly for these kinds of provisions. Mr. McNeely should be congratulated for making sure that this important issue got the attention it deserved.

Many of us—I suspect all of us—took part in Remembrance Day ceremonies. I had the opportunity of laying the wreath on behalf of the province of Ontario at Carlingwood Mall, and I want to thank the mall manager, Denis Pelletier, for providing the venue. We had hundreds of people out saying thank you to our veterans. The initiative that Premier McGuinty implemented, the Highway of Heroes, is another example of our government saying thank you to those men and women who have given the ultimate sacrifice.

As you go along, one of the key priorities of our government has been and will continue to be education. I think when we were out on the campaign trail, one of the things we all recognized was that there was labour peace in the school system. We had not experienced one single teachers' strike in the Ottawa boards of education in the four years that the McGuinty government was in office. That is something that the parents, the teachers, the support staff and especially the students very much appreciated—maybe not so much the students from time to time, because I suppose they probably wanted a few weeks off here and there. But the learning environment was much more peaceful and much more productive. Test scores are up, dropout rates are down and class sizes are down in JK to 3 in all of our school system throughout the province of Ontario.

I have some wonderful schools that I had the opportunity to visit: Pinecrest, Bayshore, Woodroffe, D. Roy Kennedy. There is a real sense of enthusiasm and a real sense of optimism back in the classroom. The kids, the teachers and parents are in a learning-positive environment as opposed to some of the confrontational approaches that the previous government was famous for.

In post-secondary education, the member from Trinity-Spadina was scoffing at a \$300 textbook and technology grant. Well, you know what? The students I spoke with who live in my riding and go to Algonquin College are very appreciative of the fact that they will be getting, starting next year—not next academic year—a \$300 contribution that could be used for technology,

whether it's software or hardware or laptops or textbooks. We all know, those of us who have gone through college and university, the cost is very expensive and sometimes prohibitive, so that \$300 grant program is going to go a long way to helping a lot of students in our province.

One of the other areas that was focused on was the tourism industry, which is vitally important to the Ottawa economy. I was very proud when our new tourism minister, Peter Fonseca from Mississauga, was able to be in a position, along with Premier McGuinty, to announce an additional contribution to the Ottawa Congress Centre, going from \$30 million to \$50 million. At last, we're finally going to see an expansion of the centre that is going to mean great things for the tourism and hospitality industry, great things for job creation in the city of Ottawa. I want to thank Jim Durrell, the new chair of the congress centre, a former mayor of Ottawa—I know my friend the government whip knows Mr. Durrell—Pat Kelly, the new president of the congress centre; Graham Bird; and many others who have been instrumental in bringing this issue forward.

I congratulate the federal government for coming to the table. I also congratulate the city of Ottawa for increasing its contribution. That was another item that was mentioned in the throne speech, because tourism is important in everyone's community. Whether it's small towns or big cities, the small and medium enterprises make up the vast majority of the tourism industry. We know the challenges tourism is facing with the high dollar, gas prices, border issues. We need to ensure that we have the facilities like the Congress Centre in Ottawa or the marketing campaigns that I know the Conservative Party was scoffing at. But guess what? In a time when the dollar is high, we want to encourage Ontarians to visit other parts of Ontario.

I had the opportunity, between the election and the Legislature coming back, of spending a few days in Prince Edward county, one of the most beautiful parts of the province, with some of the best wineries and eateries that you will come across.

I also want to talk a little bit about the important role that I have had the honour of taking over from my friend the member from Kingston and the Islands: the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I am proud of the track record of the McGuinty government when it comes to dealing in a respectful fashion with the municipal sector. I've got to tell you, I am disappointed beyond belief at the cavalier and arrogant attitude of the federal government when it comes to dealing with our municipal partners. In the 21st century, we need to all be working together to ensure that small towns and big cities have the necessary resources to deal with infrastructure, with social housing, with transit. When the mayors of the major cities in Canada and Ontario, led by people like Mayor Hazel McCallion and Mayor David Miller, went to the federal government and said, "We need your help with some of these infrastructure deficits" that we all recognize have built up over many years, the response

from the federal government, in particular the finance minister, was disgraceful. In a condescending fashion, he said, “We’re not in the pothole business” and to stop whining. I can tell you that the response to those comments has gone over like a lead balloon.

Let me read you Carol Goar, a very thoughtful columnist, who wrote a few days ago:

“Either Finance Minister Jim Flaherty has a very short memory or he thinks Ontarians do. A decade ago, he was a senior minister in the Ontario government that imposed a massive restructuring plan on the province’s cities....

“Yet Flaherty, who now controls Ottawa’s purse strings, accuses municipal leaders of profligacy. He lectures them about expenditure management. He mocks them for whining, sulking and being grumpy....

“Moreover, the finance minister”—Mr. Flaherty—“seems to have forgotten that during his run for the provincial Tory leadership in 2002, he blamed Ottawa for failing to contribute to public transit in Toronto. ‘The federal government has shirked its responsibility on that front for too long.’”

We agree with Mr. Flaherty about 2002. We hope that he remembers those comments in 2007.

Mayor Hazel McCallion said in the *Mississauga News*, “Mr. Flaherty has never been kind to municipalities. He was the guy who led the province into downloading. They downloaded everything they could on us when he was finance minister of the province, so he has no feelings for municipalities.”

Colleagues from the city of Ottawa, 150 business leaders, civic leaders, labour leaders, all marched on Parliament Hill two days ago. Let me read a paragraph from Louis Lafortune, a very thoughtful journalist for *Le Droit*.

« À court d’argent pour réparer leurs routes, leurs ponts et leurs édifices, le ras-le-bol des leaders

municipaux d’Ottawa a monté d’un cran, hier, avec une manifestation sur la colline parlementaire.

« “Des conseillers municipaux d’Ottawa qui marchent sur la colline parlementaire. Ça ne s’est jamais vu en 150 ans d’histoire de notre ville”, a lancé hier le conseiller Clive Doucet, sous la Tour de la Paix »—the first time in 150 years that city councillors and civic leaders marched on Parliament Hill to tell the federal government that this is not about potholes; this is about infrastructure; it’s about showing respect to the municipal sector.

I only have one minute left and I have so much more to say. We, as a provincial government, have been there for the municipalities; we’re working closely with them on our fiscal review, and we’ll be reporting its results in a consensus report in the spring of next year. But in order for us to facilitate the kind of work that’s needed in all of our communities, we need the federal government at the table. We don’t need their snide comments; we don’t need their condescending remarks. We need the federal government with more than goodwill, but with financial resources to help with social housing, with transit, with infrastructure because, as I said earlier, in the 21st century, the municipal sector can’t do it on its own. We’ve been there as a good partner, but we implore the federal government and the Conservative caucus across the way: Pick up the phone, speak to your colleagues on Parliament Hill and ask them to help the municipalities and the local property taxpayers. I look forward to the next four years and I very much appreciate this opportunity to speak.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): It being 6 of the clock, this House is adjourned until 10 of the clock Thursday, December 6.

The House adjourned at 1800.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Aggelonitis, Sophia (L)	Hamilton Mountain	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Albanese, Laura (L)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Culture / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Culture
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Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Finances
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Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
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Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (L)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins-Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (L)	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Brotten, Laurel C. (L)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Health) / adjointe parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Santé)
Brown, Michael A. (L)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (L)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Tourism / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Tourisme
Bryant, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	St. Paul's	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, government House leader / ministre des Affaires autochtones, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (L)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Caplan, Hon. / L'hon. David (L)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (L)	Barrie	Minister of Culture, minister responsible for seniors / ministre de la Culture, ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (L)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
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Colle, Mike (L)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craiton, Kim (L)	Niagara Falls	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Énergie
Crozier, Bruce (L)	Essex	Deputy Speaker, Chair of the committee of the whole House / Vice-Président, Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Delaney, Bob (L)	Mississauga–Streetsville	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Research and Innovation / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Dhillon, Vic (L)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Travail
Dickson, Joe (L)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (ND)	Parkdale–High Park	

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Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (L)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (L)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Minister of Finance, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre des Finances, président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Oakville	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Environment / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de l'Environnement
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (L)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Tourism / ministre du Tourisme
Gélinas, France (ND)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Minister of the Environment / ministre de l'Environnement
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hampton, Howard (ND)	Kenora–Rainy River	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (ND)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Third Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Troisième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hoy, Pat (L)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (L)	Oak Ridges–Markham	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health Promotion / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Brampton–Springdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Welland	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée)
Kwinter, Monte (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Leal, Jeff (L)	Peterborough	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires autochtones
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (L)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for seniors / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Marchese, Rosario (ND)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (L)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (L)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Richesses naturelles

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (L)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier and President of the Council, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / premier ministre et président du Conseil, ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (L)	Ancaster–Dundas– Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
McNeely, Phil (L)	Ottawa–Orléans	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Renouvellement de l'infrastructure publique
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (L)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires, ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (ND)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener–Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (L)	Huron–Bruce	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Municipal Affairs) / adjointe parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Affaires municipales)
Moridi, Reza (L)	Richmond Hill	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (L)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services (Community Safety) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels (Sécurité communautaire)
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (L)	Sault Ste. Marie	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire au ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (L)	Kitchener–Conestoga	Parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for women's issues / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Hon. / L'hon. Peters, Steve (L)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (L)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Minister of Energy / ministre de l'Énergie
Prue, Michael (ND)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (L)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (L)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (L)	London–Fanshawe	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland–Quinte West	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (Rural Affairs) / adjoint parlementaire à la ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales (Affaires rurales)
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House leader / leader parlementaire de l'opposition
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (L)	Guelph	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre de l'Éducation
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / York-Ouest	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing (Housing) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement (Logement)

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (L)	Nipissing	Minister of Revenue / ministre du Revenu
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (L)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / vice- premier ministre, ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Sorbara, Greg (L)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (L)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (ND)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (L)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship / ministre des Petites Entreprises et de l'Entrepreneuriat
Van Bommel, Maria (L)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Children and Youth Services / adjointe parlementaire à la ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (L)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (L)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Research and Innovation / ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (L)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (L)	Willowdale	Parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire au procureur général

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