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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 10 December 2007

Lundi 10 décembre 2007

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 10 December 2007

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 10 décembre 2007

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Robert Bailey: Last Thursday, I attended a meeting in my riding of over 500 cattle and pork producers. What is clear to me is that the livestock farmers in this province, and in my riding of Sarnia–Lambton, are suffering, and the McGuinty government has to act before it is too late.

Livestock farmers are facing an increase in feed costs, a high dollar and new regulations that are hitting them hard. The pork sector in Ontario alone has farm gate sales of over \$4.5 billion and is responsible for over 33,000 jobs. This government knows that the pork producers are in trouble and is still doing nothing about it. How big does an industry need to be to get the attention of this government? The beef industry has over 21,000 farmers, and they have never been able to fully recover from the BSE crisis. Now they are facing new government regulations and a high dollar that is going to put many family farms in jeopardy.

In 1998, when our party was the government and the pork sector was facing financial ruin, we announced a program that had money in the hands of farmers within 40 days. This crisis has been going on for a lot longer than 40 days. What will it take to get this government and this Minister of Agriculture to do something? The McGuinty government must immediately work with Ontario Pork and the Ontario Cattlemen's Association and quickly bring forward an aid package for the livestock sector so that our farmers have cash by Christmas.

NORVAL MORRISSEAU

Mr. Bill Mauro: It is with great sadness that I rise today to speak of the passing of one of Ontario's truly great artists, Norval Morrisseau. Mr. Morrisseau, as many of you already know, passed away in Toronto on Tuesday, December 4.

Jean-Baptiste Norman Henry Morrisseau was born 75 years ago on the Sand Point reserve in northern Ontario. Many of this Ojibwa shaman's paintings, which incorporate traditional aboriginal icons and legends, are considered masterpieces.

Achieving prominence as far back as 1960, Copper Thunderbird—Mr. Morrisseau's First Nation name—was

the recipient of the Order of Canada; the eagle feather, which is the highest honour awarded by the Assembly of First Nations; honorary doctorates from McGill and McMaster universities as well as other well-deserved honours.

In 2006, Mr. Morrisseau was the first artist of the First Nations to have a solo show at the National Gallery in Ottawa. Less than a month ago, Mr. Morrisseau was honoured in Ottawa by the House of Commons upon the announcement of his selection as the recipient of the 2008 Lifetime Achievement Award, the highest honour bestowed on aboriginal people in Canada by the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation. He was considered the father of the Woodland, or Anishinaabe, school of art, a group of First Nations artists indigenous to the area circling the Great Lakes. Due to his efforts and his much-admired paintings, art critics and academics accepted aboriginal art, which had traditionally been thought of as merely craft work, into the genre of fine art. For his many artistic achievements he will be forever remembered as one of the most important artists to come out of Ontario.

HYBRID TECHNOLOGY

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Just recently at the Los Angeles Auto Show, the General Motors Chevrolet Tahoe hybrid was awarded the 2008 Green Car of the Year; imagine that. The Tahoe hybrid, a full-sized SUV, has achieved considerable efficiency using GM's new two-mode hybrid system, and actually has the same city gas mileage rating as the Toyota Camry. This is important for Ontario's auto industry, where thousands of people are employed manufacturing larger vehicles, SUVs and pickup trucks that are purchased in great numbers to meet the practical lifestyles of Ontarians. This achievement by GM ends the argument that fuel efficiency and vehicle choice are incompatible.

This same technology will also be used in the new GM hybrid pickup trucks to be built in Oshawa next year, the first plant in Canada to produce hybrid vehicles. General Motors is also building the largest fleet of zero-emission vehicles with the Chevrolet Equinox fuel cell SUV at its Oshawa engineering centre. In addition, General Motors is working to bring new plug-in hybrids and electric cars to production in the next couple of years. General Motors Canada currently offers more vehicles with 40-miles-per-gallon or better highway fuel consumption than any other automaker.

Finally, I'd like to mention that I was especially pleased to be able to go green this Christmas at the recent

Oshawa Santa Claus Parade, where I participated in an Oshawa-built Chevy E85 Impala, which has the lowest GHG emissions of any vehicle sold in Canada while running on E85. Congratulations to General Motors and its workers for developing technologies to clean up our environment.

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Last week, the Toronto Star reported on Karl's Butcher and Grocery at 105 Roncesvalles. It has sold fresh sausages on the street for 46 years. Karl's has been forced out of business by this province. In October, the provincial government decided to enforce a harsh literal interpretation of the 2001 Food Safety and Quality Act. The act took Karl's out of the yellow-green system operated by the city and placed it under provincial regulations. According to these regulations, Karl's is now considered a manufacturing plant because it makes its own sausages.

The province is simply incapable of distinguishing between a local butcher and a factory slaughterhouse. According to Walter Jarzabek of Karl's, they decided they could not fight the province, so they decided to close just before Christmas.

We, as residents, are upset. This has enormous ramifications for a number of local butchers and restaurants. Just because a sausage comes out of a truck, that does not mean it's any healthier. I'm reading from a quotation by John Bowker on behalf of the Roncesvalles Business Improvement Area association which I've sent to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. We are asking the minister, "Please act now to save hundreds of Ontario businesses."

AJAX AND PICKERING HEALTH SITE

Mr. Joe Dickson: I would like first of all to congratulate the Honourable Steve Peters on his election as Speaker, and Bruce Crozier on his election as Deputy Speaker. I also congratulate Ted Arnott, Jim Wilson and Andrea Horwath as first, second and third Deputy Chairs of the committee of the whole respectively.

On November 8, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, George Smitherman, visited the riding of Ajax-Pickering for the official sod turning at the Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering hospital in support of its major expansion initiatives. With the provincial government assuming 90% of the capital cost of this project, residents of Ajax-Pickering should feel confident that George Smitherman and the McGuinty government have invested \$77 million into the redevelopment of the emergency room and a multitude of other vital services. Once completed, the Ajax hospital will realize 75,060 additional square feet. We are continuing to reduce the hospital wait times for those in need, continuously improving our health care system.

The major expansion is the largest in the hospital's history. It is also notable that this will mark the largest institutional expansion in the municipality's history. You can thank Minister Smitherman, the Ministry of Health

and Long-Term Care, and all of our great Ajax and Pickering volunteers for that. Minister Smitherman returned to my riding on November 27, spending the better part of the day—

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

1340

FUNDRAISING IN SIMCOE NORTH

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I've often said I'm proud to have the OPP general headquarters in my riding, but there were two recent events that took place in the last couple of weeks that I wanted to bring the House up to date on and to thank the people involved.

Mr. Jim Stiles, the president of the OPPA, District 18, and Mr. Colin Wackett, the president of the Orillia Prostate Cancer Awareness Group, took part, along with Commissioner Fantino, in a presentation for the Ride for Dad program that's held every year out of the general headquarters of the OPP. Last year they raised about \$80,000 for prostate cancer awareness. That money will go to cancer research and awareness programs as well. Next year we hope to have the event on May 17 and expect that about 500 participants will help raise money at that time. Secondly, I also want to point out that Mothers Against Drunk Driving, MADD Canada, had their campaign kick-off for the red ribbon campaign, along with the kick-off for the RIDE program. I wanted to say that these are both awareness programs and they should save lives.

Particularly, I wanted to thank Commissioner Fantino, who has really opened up the headquarters for these types of programs so that the general community can take part in all these things that save lives. Commissioner Fantino should be thanked for that, as should all the participants who took part in both the MADD Canada campaign kick-off as well as the Ride for Dad cheque presentation.

PRIX DÉCERNÉ

PAR LA FONDATION TRILLIUM

M. Phil McNeely: Je m'adresse aujourd'hui à l'Assemblée législative afin de féliciter le Rendez-vous des aînés francophones d'Ottawa, qui s'est mérité un des prix d'excellence remis par la Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario. Le RDA fut un des 25 organismes honorés lors d'une fête soulignant le 25^e anniversaire de la Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario. Ces groupes de bénévoles furent reconnus pour leur excellence, leurs idées novatrices et leur leadership dans leur communauté.

J'ai eu le plaisir de travailler avec le RDA et je peux vous assurer que leurs programmes et leurs services ont un impact des plus positifs sur les aînés vivant dans ma circonscription d'Ottawa-Orléans. Fort de l'engagement de plus de 100 bénévoles, le RDA offre des activités telles que des clubs de marche ou des ateliers éducatifs.

Il m'a fait grand plaisir de travailler avec le RDA pour améliorer la qualité de vie des aînés d'Ottawa-Orléans.

Permettez-moi de féliciter de nouveau le RDA et leur président, Marcel Gibeault, le vice-président, Fernand Leduc, et leur coordonnatrice, Julie Lizotte, pour le leadership et l'engagement qu'ils apportent à notre collectivité.

VISITORS

Mr. Frank Klees: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I realize that you'll probably say this is not a point of order, but I would ask members to welcome to the Legislature Mr. Atul Mehra, C.A., president of Mehra & Company Chartered Accountants of Markham, and Mr. Hans Bathija of Toronto.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member has obviously studied the standing orders and he has discovered that it is not a point of order. But, gentlemen, welcome to Queen's Park today.

HEALTH SERVICES IN MARKHAM-STOUFFVILLE

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm pleased to tell you that I recently attended an open house in my riding at Markham Stouffville Hospital to discuss its proposed expansion with members of the community. This proposal is a unique concept where the town of Markham will build a community centre, complete with library, immediately adjacent to the hospital to create a hub for health and wellness in the heart of east Markham.

Since 2003, the McGuinty government has provided to Markham Stouffville Hospital a 27% increase in base funding in addition to over \$18.4 million in one-time funding for new nursing positions, a diabetes team, a new MRI and replacement CAT scanner. This has resulted in significant improvements in wait times for diagnostics, hip and knee replacements, and cataract and cancer surgery.

However, as we move forward, there is more to do to enhance my community's quality of life. This government has recognized the growth in my riding and the need to expand acute care, mental health programs, diagnostic capacity and emergency department services. The hospital board anticipates receiving ministerial approval of its functional program this coming spring. This approval will be a crucial step in the process as we move towards groundbreaking.

OPERATION RED NOSE

Mr. Mike Colle: I rise in the House today to discuss an important and unique program that helps make our roads safer during this holiday season, called Operation Red Nose. It began in Quebec City in 1984 as a way to fight against impaired driving during the holiday season, and it has since spread across the province and country. This is a free, volunteer driving service that is open to all motorists who have been drinking or who do not feel fit to drive their own vehicle. The service is kept completely confidential.

To chart its success, you need only to look at the fact that in the first year, it helped to escort 463 motorists

home safely, but in 2006, the number was more than 4,613 people across the country. In total, since 1984, more than a million people have been kept off the roads to make sure that the roads are safe.

There are currently seven communities here in Ontario that provide the service during the month of December, from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m., on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, and on New Year's Eve. In the 2006 holiday campaign, Ontario achieved all of its goals, resulting in zero crashes, zero injuries and zero fatalities during its hours of operation.

Donations are accepted and are given to local organizations supporting youth and amateur sport. Each year, more than \$1 million is donated to one or more recognized non-profit youth organizations.

I ask that the House join me in thanking all those volunteers who have helped make this program, Operation Red Nose, a success in communities across Ontario and Canada.

VISITOR

Hon. Jim Watson: Notwithstanding the fact that I don't believe it's a point of order, I'd like the House to welcome a resident of the great city of Ottawa, David Gourlay, to the chamber. Welcome.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for Toronto-Danforth. Of course, you know this isn't a point of order as well.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Speaker, I'm following ministerial examples. Surely I'm on safe ground.

Mr. Peter Kormos: You'll end up on the front page of the Sun.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I'm hearing advice from some honourable members here.

I rise to welcome Donna Dillman, here today from Frontenac county, on the 65th day of her hunger strike opposing uranium exploration in Frontenac county.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): As you know, those weren't points of order. And just so anybody else doesn't feel left out today, we welcome you all to Queen's Park.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

ACCESS TO ADOPTION RECORDS ACT
(VITAL STATISTICS STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT), 2007

LOI DE 2007 SUR L'ACCÈS
AUX DOSSIERS D'ADOPTION
(MODIFICATION DE LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LES STATISTIQUES DE L'ÉTAT CIVIL)

Mrs. Meilleur moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 12, An Act to amend the Vital Statistics Act in relation to adoption information and to make consequential amendments to the Child and Family Services Act / Projet de loi 12, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les statistiques de l'état civil en ce qui a trait aux renseignements sur les adoptions et apportant des modifications corrélatives à la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille.

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. Madeleine Meilleur: I'll wait for my comment during ministerial statements.

1350

PATIENT-TO-DOCTOR RATIO ACT, 2007

LOI DE 2007 SUR LE RAPPORT ENTRE PATIENTS ET MÉDECINS

Mr. Martiniuk moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to establish a yearly target for the patient-to-doctor ratio / Projet de loi 13, Loi établissant un rapport cible annuel entre patients et médecins.

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

All those in favour will say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

The ayes have it.

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: Today there are 1.3 million men, women and children in Ontario without a family doctor, and unfortunately, it's going to get worse.

Since 1992, all three governing parties have promised to solve the problem but have only made it worse. We now have less than half the doctors per capita than the United States of America.

This bill forces all governments to finally address this crisis by establishing an absolute minimum number of doctors required to service Ontario patients. This patient-to-doctor-ratio bill forces governments to meet a yearly target, and if they do not, all cabinet ministers would take a reduction in pay for that year.

Every person in Ontario is entitled to the services of a family doctor.

872440 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2007

Mr. Dunlop moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr4, An Act to revive 872440 Ontario Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

FIRE PROTECTION STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2007

LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA PROTECTION CONTRE L'INCENDIE

Mr. Prue moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to deem that the Building Code and the Fire Code require fire detectors, interconnected fire alarms and non-combustible fire escapes / Projet de loi 14, Loi prévoyant que le code du bâtiment et le code de prévention des incendies sont réputés exiger des détecteurs d'incendie, des systèmes d'alerte d'incendie interconnectés et des sorties de secours incombustibles.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would just ask members to tone it down a little bit, please. Thank you.

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. Michael Prue: This bill is a very simple bill. This is now its third iteration. It requires that every residential building with two or more dwelling units is equipped with fire detectors in all public corridors and common areas of the building and interconnected fire alarms that are audible throughout the building.

The second part, which I think requires absolutely no explanation at all, is that every fire escape is constructed of a non-combustible material.

RETAIL SALES TAX AMENDMENT ACT, 2007

LOI DE 2007 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA TAXE DE VENTE AU DÉTAIL

Mr. Ouellette moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to amend the Retail Sales Tax Act / Projet de loi 15, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la taxe de vente au détail.

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: In the Retail Sales Tax Act there is a component for a fuel-for-consumption tax that's put on only in Ontario, the only jurisdiction in North America. This adds up to as much as \$7,000 in added tax for vehicles produced in Oshawa. In light of the recent 2008 statement that I just made, it's time that we eliminate this tax in order to assist the auto sector in moving forward and producing. While we have that opportunity, we should move forward in ensuring the auto sector remains strong.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon. Michael Bryant: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding committees.

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

Hon. Michael Bryant: I move that notwithstanding standing order 106, the following committees be appointed for the duration of the 39th Parliament and that the membership of these committees is as follows:

The standing committee on estimates: Mr. Craitor, Mr. Delaney, Ms. Mangat, Mr. McNeely, Mr. Rinaldi, Mr. Dunlop, Mr. Hudak, Mr. O'Toole, Mr. Bisson;

The standing committee on finance and economic affairs: Ms. Aggelonitis, Mr. Arthurs, Mr. Hoy, Mr. Lalonde, Ms. Pendergast, Mr. Sousa, Mr. Barrett, Mr. Arnott, Mr. Prue;

The standing committee on general government: Mr. Brownell, Mrs. Jeffrey, Mr. Kular, Mr. Mauro, Ms. Mitchell, Mr. Oraziotti, Mr. Bailey, Mrs. Savoline, Mr. Marchese;

The standing committee on government agencies: Mr. Brown, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Ramsay, Mrs. Sandals, Mrs. Van Bommel, Mrs. Munro, Mr. Hillier, Ms. MacLeod, M^{me} Gélinas;

The standing committee on justice policy: Mr. Berardinetti, Mr. Leal, Mr. Moridi, Mr. Naqvi, Mr. Rinaldi, Mr. Zimmer, Mrs. Elliott, Mr. Yakabuski, Mr. Kormos;

The standing committee on the Legislative Assembly: Mrs. Albanese, Mr. Balkissoon, Mr. Delaney, Mr. Dickson, Mr. Flynn, Mr. Sergio, Ms. Jones, Mr. Miller (Progressive Conservatives), Mr. Tabuns;

The standing committee on public accounts: Mrs. Albanese, Mr. McNeely, Mrs. Sandals, Mrs. Van Bommel, Mr. Zimmer, Mr. Sterling, Mr. Ouellette, Mr. Hardeman, Ms. Horwath;

The standing committee on regulations and private bills: Mr. Balkissoon, Mr. Colle, Mr. Craitor, Mr. Ruprecht, Mr. Sergio, Mr. Naqvi, Mr. Murdoch, Mr. Martiniuk, Mr. Prue, Mr. Miller (New Democratic Party);

The standing committee on social policy: Ms. Broten, Mr. Dhillon, Ms. Jaczek, Mr. Levac, Mr. Qadri, Mr. Ramal, Ms. Scott, Mr. Shurman, Ms. DiNovo;

That all standing orders which currently apply to the standing committee on justice and social policy shall apply to the standing committee on justice policy and the standing committee on social policy.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'm sure I probably missed it, but on private bills, it was Mr. Prue and Mr. Miller?

Hon. Michael Bryant: Yes, Mr. Prue and Mr. Miller.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Motion by the government House leader, Mr. Bryant: "I move that notwithstanding standing order 106, the following"—

Interjection.

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

Agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Michael Bryant: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forth a motion without notice concerning this afternoon's debate.

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

Hon. Michael Bryant: I move that for the purposes of this afternoon's debate on government notice of motion 12, up to 15 minutes be allotted to each recognized party to speak to the motion, after which the Speaker shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of the motion, and in case of any division the division bell be limited to 10 minutes.

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

Agreed to.

1400

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

ADOPTION

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour introduire une nouvelle loi ontarienne relative à la divulgation de renseignements sur l'adoption, une loi qui, si elle est adoptée, permettra de moderniser considérablement le système ontarien de divulgation de renseignements sur l'adoption.

I would first like to welcome some guests to the Legislature today. Sitting in the members' gallery are Karen Lynn, with the Canadian Centre for Natural Mothers; Wendy Rowney, with Adoption Support and Kinship Toronto; and Monica Byrne, with Ottawa Parent Finders. They travelled all the way from Ottawa to be here with us today. Our guests are also members of the Coalition for Open Adoption Records. Bienvenue.

This legislation is important to our guests, as it is to so many Ontarians who have been involved with adoptions. The Access to Adoption Records Act, 2007, if passed, will enshrine openness in future adoption records in the province. It would give adult adoptees and birth parents access to identifying information in their adoption records and information about their personal past, which so many people have wanted for so long. If passed, the legislation will allow adoptees to learn where they were born, their original name at birth and the names of their parents, and will allow birth parents to learn about the child they placed for adoption, including their new name and where the adoption took place.

At the same time, our proposed legislation will safeguard the privacy of those involved in adoptions. People

who have their adoption orders made in Ontario before September 1, 2008, will have the option of placing a disclosure veto on their file. This respects the recent decision of the Superior Court of Justice and the views of Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner. Anyone who chooses to use a disclosure veto would be asked to voluntarily provide their medical history so that birth relatives may be able to obtain personal health information.

Les membres de l'Assemblée savent que notre gouvernement affirme depuis toujours que les personnes engagées dans une procédure d'adoption doivent avoir le droit de connaître leur identité et leur famille, au même titre que les autres citoyens de l'Ontario.

Ontario has moved past the days when adoptions were conducted in secret and were kept a secret as the child grew up. Today many adoptions are open. Birth relatives and adoptive families know one another's identities, and birth parents often stay in touch with the children they gave up for adoption. This is a practice that reflects what child welfare experts have known for years: Adoptees want to know about their origins and birth parents want to know that their children are happy and healthy in their new families.

There is nothing more important than family. No matter who you are or whatever your situation, you should never be denied access to your history and your roots. That is what makes us who we are. It's time that our adoption information laws reflect the reality of our society, and we believe that it is in everyone's best interests to move quickly with these changes. I encourage all members of this House to support this important legislation.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

ADOPTION

Mrs. Julia Munro: I think it's important to understand that the bill the government has introduced today exists for only one reason. It exists because the McGuinty government ignored the demands for privacy rights by thousands of birth mothers and adopted children.

When the original adoption disclosure bill passed this House, your government was told again and again in committee that you were about to violate the right to privacy of hundreds of thousands of people. The privacy commissioner told you your bill violated people's rights. Our party told you your bill violated people's rights. The Ontario Superior Court agreed with us and with those who wished only to protect their own privacy.

As a member, I know members across the House were inundated with emails, anonymous ones, from those who were afraid of this bill, and who had made an agreement with the government, which the minister has referred to as "in the past days," when adoptions were conducted in secret. That's exactly the point: These people had lived with this secret sometimes for 50 or more years.

The judge said:

"People expect, and are entitled to expect, that the government will not share [confidential personal] information without their consent.

"The protection of privacy is undeniably a fundamental value in Canadian society, especially when aspects of one's individual identity are at stake."

Birth mothers are lucky that they had the Charter of Rights and our courts to protect them from this government. It is a shame that it took a court to make you see the error of your ways.

You should have listened to the ordinary citizens who expressed their concerns, citizens such as the constituent of my colleague the member for Newmarket–Aurora, who wrote that "for the very first time in my life, I am afraid. I am afraid of the government of Ontario's announced intention to abrogate the province's long-standing adoption law, a law that guaranteed the privacy of both the adopted child and adoptive parents."

Many of them could not speak to the committee about the bill because of their desire to protect their anonymity.

A woman wrote to our party to say that the "Liberal government is taking away my privacy rights by bringing in adoption disclosure retroactivity.

"I based my whole life on being told my file would always be sealed....It is unbelievable that they would go that far back to turn families upside down."

Another said, "I was promised this in a courtroom before a judge, represented by a lawyer, a frightened teenager who was still living the nightmare of an unwanted pregnancy.

"So when I was promised this while on the stand in this courtroom, surrounded by people more learned than me, was I supposed to know that this promise had no legal basis, and would be discarded so willingly by the government decades later?"

On this side of the House, we look forward to the discussion on this bill. If it contains the protection of privacy rights that the courts demand and citizens deserve, I am certain we will be able to support the bill.

ADOPTION

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: In the few seconds left, I think it's important to read the judgment of Judge Belobaba, who made it so clear that the government of Ontario probably has the least regard for privacy rights of all governments in not only North America but the world. The people of Ontario should be concerned with the posturing of Mr. McGuinty and his cabinet ministers on this bill.

Perhaps the greatest lesson from this particular piece of legislation is how important our Charter of Rights is. If it had not been for our Charter of Rights in Canada, we would have had a travesty in the breach of our privacy rights here in Canada, in Ontario. Thank God for the Charter of Rights.

1410

ADOPTION

Mr. Michael Prue: I would like to start by quoting His Honour Judge Belobaba at section 178 of his decision: "I have come to this conclusion after much deliberation. No judge takes lightly his or her responsibility as a 'constitutional umpire.' No judge is eager to find that a law enacted by a democratically elected majority is unconstitutional and must be set aside. But our system of government is not based on majority rule alone. Ours is a constitutional democracy with an entrenched Charter of Rights and Freedoms that is intended primarily to protect individuals and minorities against the excesses of the majority. Included within the charter's ambit of protection are the applicants, who are part of a small minority of adoptees and birth parents that wish to protect their privacy. They have every right to do so. The applicants have established that their right under section 7 of the charter has been breached and the government has failed to justify this breach under section 1." That is what the bill is here for today.

I listened to what the minister had to say and I would agree with her that we have no option, given the judge's ruling, but to amend this bill. But I would state for the record that we are very surprised at the minister's statement, in which it is almost halfway through her statement before there is a single line indicating that there is a responsibility on this government to amend the bill in order to meet constitutional safeguards.

It is well known by members, or most members, of this House that the genesis of this bill originated not with the government but with a former member of this House, Marilyn Churley. I was with Ms. Churley on that day when the judge rendered his decision. I was with Ms. Churley when she first heard the news that a portion of the previous bill from the previous Parliament was ruled unconstitutional. I want to tell this House, and I'm sure it would come as no surprise to anyone who knew her, that she was visibly upset, she was disappointed, and she wondered what was going to happen. It being September, we were out knocking on doors; she was assisting me in my campaign.

But I want to go back to what Ms. Churley had to say or what she did over all those years. Ms. Churley was herself, as she has told this House so many times, a parent of a child that she gave up for adoption; a parent who agonized at that action; a parent who, for so many years, for two decades, sought in vain to try to find the son she had given up. When she finally found him, she vowed she would assist all other parents and all other adoptees in having an avenue and an opening to find their birth parents or their birth children.

She was diligent to the extreme in this. She first put forward a bill, Bill 88, in December 1998, which did not pass. She put forward a bill in June 2000, Bill 108; in June 2001, a third bill, Bill 77; in May 2003, a fourth bill, which was Bill 16; and in December 2003, a fifth and

final bill, Bill 14. It was all subsumed and all became part of the government record when the government eventually took up the cudgel and moved with what she had to say.

As I said, I was with her on that day when the bill was deemed unconstitutional in that respect. She was saddened, but she would want to tell this House that she wants the bill to continue. If it requires the legislative amendments that have been put forward today by the honourable minister, then so be it; it will be done. If it requires that in order to safeguard the lives of those before September 2008 who gave up their children for adoption, then so be it.

But I must state for the record that, notwithstanding that these actions are necessary in law, we believe in this party that all children have the right to know who their parents are and that all children have the right to know what those health circumstances might be. We agree that parents must be protected if that is what the law was at that time, and we look forward to the speedy passage of this bill so that parents and children both might have the full regard of a law that will stand up in the courts of this province.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE
DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

Hon. Michael Bryant: Speaker, may we have unanimous consent for a member of each party to speak for up to five minutes regarding International Human Rights Day?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Bryant seeks unanimous consent of the House for a member of each party to speak for five minutes regarding International Human Rights Day. Agreed? Agreed.

The Attorney General.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: It's an honour for me to rise in the House today to mark International Human Rights Day. December 10 is the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1948, a declaration that enshrines rights and dictates that those rights should be shared by all nations and all peoples within them; defined a set of fundamental rights and freedoms as a standard to which we all must and should aspire; declares those rights to include the right to equality, life, liberty and security of the person; and also declares that discrimination should be prohibited when it is based on certain grounds such as race, gender, religion and national or social origin.

La déclaration a été l'un des premiers accomplissements notables des Nations Unies. Quelque 60 ans plus tard, elle demeure un instrument puissant qui exerce toujours le même effet sur la vie des gens dans le monde entier. La déclaration est devenue le document le mieux connu et le plus souvent cité dans le domaine des droits de la personne.

Ontario's own human rights system is based on the United Nations declaration. In fact, in 1962 Ontario became the first province or territory in Canada to enact a Human Rights Code, and I want to say that human rights and the protection of human rights has not been and should never be a partisan issue in this House.

It was enacted in 1962; it was strengthened again on several occasions by adding prohibited grounds, preventing discrimination in 1981 on the basis of the type of housing you inhabit; in 1986 on the basis of sexual orientation; in 1999 on the basis of whether you were in a same-sex relationship; and finally, in 2006, on the basis of age. Ontario has always had a proud history of leadership, and it is leadership based on who we are and where we have come from. Our strength has always been our diversity. Our strength has always been in the fact that we have people from different places, different cultures, different races and religions mixing and working together. Our strength is a recognition of that diversity. We are a society based on respect for individual rights and collective values, and we know that protecting both enhances the nature of our society.

I'm very pleased that over the next number of months we will be implementing a very significant change in the enforcement and the protections for those individual rights and collective values. On June 30, the Human Rights Code Amendment Act, 2006, will come into full force to strengthen Ontario's human rights system. I want to say at this stage that I would like to thank my colleague the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Michael Bryant, for his leadership in bringing forth that piece of legislation, and all members of the House for the wisdom they have shared in ensuring that we have a strong method of enforcement. When it is fully implemented, we will not only strengthen individual protections by having a system that is faster and more effective but we will also enhance the capacity of the system to address systemic discrimination. Increasingly in our society, with its complexity, with its challenges, we need a system that can strengthen the ability to get at systemic discrimination.

1420

I want to acknowledge in the gallery today the chief commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Barbara Hall, and Michael Gottheil, who's the chair of the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario, and thank them for the excellent work that they have been doing on behalf of all Ontarians. It is excellent work that they are spearheading on behalf of us all, because we all recognize that we have a role to play. Apart from tribunals and courts and Legislatures, we all have a role to play in protecting human rights. There is no group that can do it more profoundly than a group consisting of all Ontarians, and we recognize that protecting another's rights, protecting another's system of values, is the surest way that we protect and enhance our own—again, a recognition of International Human Rights Day, the work that has been done, the work we continue today, and the work we will

do in the future in ensuring that Ontario is the place we all want to live in.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'm honoured to rise to speak today on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus concerning the international day for human rights. December 10 commemorates the day in 1948 when the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Its formal inception dates from 1950 after the assembly passed Resolution 423, which invited all nations to adopt December 10 in each year as human rights day.

The universal declaration inspired many human rights declarations around the world, including Canada's, and indeed Canada has a proud record on human rights issues. In fact, it was a Canadian from New Brunswick, John Peters Humphrey, who, as the first director of the human rights division of the United Nations Secretariat, became the principal drafter of the universal declaration.

Here in Ontario, the Progressive Conservative government under John Robarts enacted the Human Rights Code in 1962. Since then, significant progress has been made in the advancement of human rights in this province.

Sadly, this is not the case in many parts of the world today. Even as recently as this past weekend, at a Summit of Equals that was held involving leaders from Africa and Europe, Chancellor Angela Merkel said this about Zimbabwe: "'The current situation in Zimbabwe is hurting the image of the new Africa,' she said. 'The situation in Zimbabwe concerns us all, in Europe as in Africa. We don't have the right to look away when human rights are being trampled upon.'"

Though our system of human rights compares favourably with the rest of the world, there's still much to be done in Ontario, and we can't be sitting back and resting on our laurels. This Legislature unanimously passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act in 2005, and I commend the McGuinty government for bringing it forward. However, its implementation over the last two years has been, in the words of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance, or AODA, "toothless and disappointing."

We need to redouble our efforts to ensure that barriers are removed for people with disabilities so that they can participate fully in our society. Similarly, we need to ensure that our human rights system in Ontario remains accessible to all vulnerable people who need its protection. I would urge this government to allocate the resources necessary to the legal support centre established under the human rights reform legislation, Bill 107, so that no one needing assistance to bring a complaint involving an infringement of human rights is left behind. We need to remember that all of us as individuals and as members of our society owe a duty to our most vulnerable citizens.

In closing, I would like to quote Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who said, "Whatever career you may choose for yourself—doctor, lawyer, teacher—let me propose an avocation to be pursued along with it. Become a

dedicated fighter for human rights. Make it a central part of your life. It will make you a better doctor, a better lawyer, a better teacher. It will enrich your spirit as nothing else possibly can. It will give you that rare sense of nobility that can only spring from love and selflessly helping your fellow man. Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for human rights. You will make a better person of yourself, a greater nation of your country and a finer world to live in."

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just remind members that some of your conversations are a little loud. It's challenging to hear. We want to give respect to all the speakers on all sides. If you have a serious conversation, I ask that you take it outside.

The member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It is an honour to stand and speak on International Human Rights Day. Certainly in the spirit of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King's words, I'd like to say that we still haven't got there; we still haven't gone far enough in Ontario. Last year, I submitted a resolution to add two little words to the Human Rights Code: gender identity. I know that Barbara Hall supported me on this; she wrote a letter to the Toronto Star. I would ask on this occasion that we might do this, we might add these two little words, "gender identity."

"What does it do?" you might ask. What it does is it protects the human rights of the most vulnerable in our community, and that is our trans population. Our trans population is still not protected. Today Égale was here, and I speak as well in honour of Égale and all the work that they do. So perhaps we might move on this.

I share my time with my benchmate Mr. Peter Kormos.

Mr. Peter Kormos: New Democrats join in this acknowledgement of International Human Rights Day. We understand it's all so easy for Ontarians and Canadians to point abroad at any number of places in the world where the abuse of human rights is flagrant, atrocious and totally beyond any rationalization. But at the same time as we look abroad and condemn those abuses and speak out on behalf of victims of human rights abuses, we certainly have to look within our community of the province of Ontario. It is truly sad that on this occasion we talk about the international day for human rights when this government, just within the year, through Bill 107 abolished—dismantled—the Ontario Human Rights Commission as an advocacy group here in the province of Ontario. The government privatized human rights advocacy. While I understand that a wealthy person who then becomes the victim of a human rights abuse is entitled to hire lawyers and use the tribunal and hire investigators, I also point out that it is the rare occasion when the Mercedes-Benz or the Porsche set find themselves to be victims of human rights abuses. In fact, it's far more often than not new Canadians, low-income Canadians, poor Canadians, working women and men in their workplaces.

Speaking of workplaces, for this government to stand up and talk about wanting to participate in the acknowl-

edgment of the international day for human rights yet to still deny agricultural workers in this province the right to belong to a trade union and form a collective bargaining unit so they can bargain freely with their employers I find a little bit amazing. Agricultural workers, working in some of the dirtiest, most dangerous jobs in our province, earning some of the lowest wages in our province, are still denied by this government the right to belong to a trade union and to freely collectively bargain. I would find it easier to listen to the minister and his comments were this government at the same time announcing legislation to introduce agricultural workers to the world of free collective bargaining. It's difficult to participate in an acknowledgment of the international day of human rights with this government when this government denies the vast majority of workers in this province the right to join a union and form a collective bargaining unit by virtue of card-based certification, giving that prerogative, that privilege, to but a small group of workers here in the province of Ontario.

Unionized workplaces are safer workplaces. Unionized workplaces are ones where there's more job security. Unionized workplaces are more productive. Yet this government is effectively denying some of the poorest workers in this province—the Wal-Mart workers, the workers in the hospitality sector, the people who do the cleaning and some of the heaviest lifting and some of the dirtiest jobs for the lowest pay—the right to belong to a union because it won't extend to them the opportunity to form a union local on the basis of card-based certification.

So here we are, joining together arm-in-arm and crying out against human rights abuses internationally and calling for an end to those human right abuses, yet we as a Legislature are in a province that persists in denying fundamental, basic human rights to so many of its own citizens, to so many of its own residents. I say if this government is going to be believed around issues like this, it would be well advised to put its own house in order first and to start addressing the human rights of Ontarians before it starts announcing its interest in solidarity in the attack on human rights internationally.

1430

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like all members to welcome some special guests of mine in the Speaker's gallery today: Jeff Pedler, Craig Bradford, Suzanne vanBommel, Carrie Snyders, Merle McCallum, Scott Anderson, Wendy Farmer, Carole Watson, Kim Davis, Darin Harris, my brother, Joe Peters, his children, Olivia and Nicholas, and, most importantly, my mother, Joan. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Hon. George Smitherman: I'll be sure to be on my best behaviour.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'm sure because my mother is here—I heard the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care—everyone will be on their best behaviour today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PAROLE SYSTEM

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I have a question for the Premier. Premier, I'm sure you've been briefed on a public safety matter that concerns all Ontarians, but particularly downtown Toronto residents with children. I'm referring to the transfer of Christopher Goodwin to the Keele Centre in Toronto, as reported in the Toronto Sun on Saturday. According to this article, Goodwin is a notorious pedophile, a repeat child molester who, according to the National Parole Board, remains a high risk for reoffending.

Premier, can you confirm that this notorious pedophile is now residing in the Keele Centre in Toronto, and if he is, do you have any concerns?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I refer this to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: The release of any federal offender is the responsibility of the Correctional Service of Canada and the National Parole Board. If the leader of the official opposition has any questions with regards to the release of any federal offender, he should be contacting the Correctional Service of Canada.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Boy, I guess the minister is not concerned about a high-risk individual being secretly dropped into a neighbourhood with five schools and 10 to 20 daycares.

Mr. Goodwin has been released from custody, designated as a long-term offender, and placed under a supervision order by the National Parole Board, an order that has no electronic monitoring and tracking requirement and only a six-month residency requirement that sticks him in the Keele Centre right here in Toronto. Ontarians—parents and children—deserve greater vigilance in this. So my question now to the minister is, can he tell us if his officials were even aware of this high-profile case and confirm that they had in fact made submissions to the parole board prior to Mr. Goodwin's release?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Let me speak about what we do in Ontario and then the leader can do whatever he wants with regards to the comparison. In Ontario, the Parole and Earned Release Board and Ontario's correctional officials make release decisions that put community safety first. That means that in Ontario, those whom the board considers dangerous don't get paroled. That means that in Ontario, those who are considered dangerous get don't get temporary releases from jail. I have to be perfectly honest, Mr. Speaker. If he has any concerns about the federal system, he should talk to the Correctional Service of Canada. In Ontario, this ministry and this government put community safety first.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: In terms of community safety, this is unbelievable negligence on the part of this minister and his government.

Some time ago, the National Parole Board attempted to place Mr. Goodwin in a halfway house in Kingston, but the community uproar forced them to back off and he completed his sentence.

Minister, the reality is that you and your government dropped the ball on this. You were asleep at the switch and we now have a repeat child molester, unmonitored, walking the streets in Toronto. Your government was not alert and proactive in making this case a priority. You had the opportunity to appear before the parole board. You should have put Ontario's concerns and recommendations to them.

Mr. Goodwin is clearly a dangerous man. In six months, he will walk out of Keele Centre a free man likely to reoffend. What steps, Minister, are you and your government taking to protect the public, especially children, from this walking menace?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: The Police Services Act allows the police to disclose public information on offenders in their community when reasonable grounds exist to believe that the offender poses a significant risk to public safety. The decision on whether to do a public notification—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Excuse me. Stop the—no, keep the clock running. Did I hear what I thought I heard you say, or did you—

Interjection.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: You must have misunderstood me.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Okay. Because I thought you used some profanity.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: No, I didn't, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Okay. Minister?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Let me reinforce that the decision on whether to do a public notification is up to the police. They are in the best position to determine the risks posed by an offender, and they are aware of the law enforcement needs of their community.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question? The leader of the official opposition.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: The reality is, the Ontario government has the right to appeal to the federal parole board to vary the order to have such things as electronic monitoring applied.

SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Again, a question to the Premier: At the same time that people are concerned about sex offenders being dropped into their midst, we're also hearing about the misuse of funds designated for the sex offender registry in Ontario. According to a story in Saturday's National Post, tomorrow's report from the Auditor General is expected to mention that under former OPP Commissioner Gwen Boniface, money was diverted by the OPP from the province's sex offender registry into other police initiatives.

Premier, can you tell us how much money was diverted, what impact the removal had on the operations of the registry, and what knowledge or involvement your government had with respect to the diversion of these monies?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Let me say that, first of all, we believe that the Ontario sex offender registry is an important tool for our police. Christopher's Law was important legislation. It's legislation that had been put forward under the previous government, and that I myself supported. They tell me that police access the registry now more than 400 times a day, which reinforces how important a tool it is for them.

I'm not going to prejudge the Auditor General's report, but I can say that I've read that same story. It has presented me with some significant concerns, obviously. I look forward to getting more details from the Auditor General's report and, I think more importantly, the recommendations that flow from that.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I think we all know that the government has had the Auditor General's report for some time and has had an opportunity to respond in terms of concerns. Also, there was a second part to my question with respect to any knowledge or involvement your government had with respect to the diversion of those monies.

We know that the OPP is faced with tremendous financial pressures. Caledonia has to be the most significant. At last count, 124 OPP officers were taken off patrol in other areas of the province to police Caledonia because of your failure to deal appropriately with the issues in that community.

Premier, I'm going to ask you again: Where did the money go, what other police initiatives did it cover, and for what period of time were you failing to properly monitor and track registered sex offenders?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I refer it to the minister.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: First of all, let me correct the record of the member over there when he says that the OPP has been starved of cash. The OPP's budget has risen \$155 million over the course of the last four years.

But let me also make it abundantly clear that there is a process in place with regard to the release of Auditor General's reports. We will respect that process. We will allow the Auditor General to make his submission tomorrow without comment until that time.

1440

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I think it's appropriate to ask today with respect to the involvement and knowledge the government had with respect to diversion of monies from a tool that I think most Ontarians would feel is critically important in terms of monitoring the movements and whereabouts of sex offenders in the province of Ontario. If the OPP felt they had to divert monies from such an important tool while at the same time this government is handing \$32 million out the back door to its Liberal friends, there's something wrong in the province of Ontario with this government in terms of its approach to policing, in terms of its approach to community safety.

So I ask you once again: What happened to the sex offender registry during this period of time, where did those monies go, and what involvement did your government have in that decision?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Again, let me reinforce what I said in the previous answer: We are going to respect the process. The Auditor General will release his report tomorrow. We will comment after that report has been tabled here in the House.

But let me make it abundantly clear: The OPP has not been starved for funds over the course of the last four years. There has been an increase of \$155 million in the operating budget for the OPP.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Premier. Ontario is losing literally thousands of manufacturing jobs every month under the McGuinty government. Workers, communities, and companies want to see meaningful, concrete action from the McGuinty government to sustain Ontario's manufacturing jobs, not more superficial photo ops. Premier, in Thursday's economic statement, will we see any meaningful, concrete action from the McGuinty government to sustain manufacturing jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question. The leader of the NDP, of course, implies that our new, next generation jobs fund of \$1.15 billion does not constitute real and meaningful action. We see it differently. Our half-billion-dollar auto sector fund leveraged \$7 billion worth of new investment; we see that as significant and meaningful as well. We also have money that we put in place to support our forestry sector, our advanced manufacturing sector and so on and so forth, but we do also recognize that there is more that we can do, and we look forward to speaking to that in some detail later this week.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Just about everything the Premier mentioned in his effort to avoid the question has been announced before, and since those announcements, tens of thousands of jobs have been lost. So mentioning old news is certainly not concrete, meaningful action.

I want to quote from the Timmins Chamber of Commerce, which recommends, in a release of only a few months ago, that the provincial government set an industrial hydro rate of "\$45 per megawatt hour for manufacturers in order to attract and retain businesses." They quote, "At the present time, hydro prices are 40% less expensive in Quebec and 60% lower in Manitoba. The chamber of commerce is concerned that existing enterprises will relocate their manufacturing operations as a cost-saving measure."

My question: Will we see any meaningful, concrete action on the issue of an industrial hydro rate that allows manufacturers to sustain jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I can understand the leader of the NDP's interest in these issues, but obviously I'm not prepared to disclose the contents of our fall economic

statement here today. But I can say that I know that the leader of the NDP recognizes that Manitoba and Quebec have been blessed by Mother Nature in a way that we here in Ontario have not been when it comes to our geography and our hydroelectric potential. We are doing what we can to expand capacity at Niagara Falls. We are doing what we can to expand opportunities through our run-of-the-river untapped resources. But I can say that at the same time, we've determined that it's important for us to have in place a hydro pricing policy that is manageable, that is affordable, that's effective and that is responsible not just to our generation but those yet to come. We have tried to bring in place a hydro pricing policy that is removed from the hands of the politicians and that speaks to our continuing responsibility to ratepayers, not only those today but those yet to come.

Mr. Howard Hampton: Well, what the Premier has done is create the Ontario Power Authority, which isn't even responsible to this Legislature; an Ontario Power Authority that is stacked with Liberal political appointments. So if anything, hydro rates are more political than ever before.

But again I want to quote from the Timmins Chamber of Commerce: "It is estimated that a large consumer, such as Timmins-based Xstrata Copper, could save \$40 million annually by moving their refining operations to Quebec. This would have a catastrophic effect on the northeastern Ontario economy with a loss of 4,000 to 5,000 jobs."

I hear the Premier talking about all kinds of things other than a response. What these workers want to know and what these companies want to know is, is there going to be some concrete and specific action to deal with the problem of escalating industrial hydro rates in Ontario, something which is killing jobs? Yes or no, Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I really think I have answered that question, and I'm not going to disclose details of our fall economic statement here, today and now.

What I have heard from those workers who have unfortunately lost their jobs—and those job losses are occurring right across Canada and throughout the United States of America when it comes to the manufacturing sector in particular, as well as some in the agriculture and forestry sectors. But insofar as Ontario workers are concerned, they are particularly upset by the fact that they are getting about \$4,000 less, on average, than Canadians who lose their jobs in other parts of the country.

I would say to the leader of the NDP: We would appreciate his support in this regard if he could speak out to his federal colleagues and remind them of the discrimination that is hurting Ontario workers who lose their jobs. If we had, here in Ontario, received that extra \$4,000 per employee last year, Ontario workers—not the government—would have received \$1.7 billion more in benefits. I think that is unfair and I would appreciate the leader of the NDP's support when it comes to standing up to the federal government and speaking out on behalf of the interests of Ontario workers.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Howard Hampton: I thank the Premier for pointing out the injustice that his Liberal brothers have delivered to unemployed workers in Ontario. It's something that Liberals should have taken care of.

Yesterday, thousands of citizens marched to protest conditions at the McGuinty government's profit-driven, corporate-consortia hospital in Brampton. My question is simply this: When will the Premier stop passing the buck and stop trying to force the local board to take responsibility, and call an inquiry to address the overwhelming public concern that continues to develop in Brampton with respect to this profit-driven, corporate-consortia hospital?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that the Minister of Health is going to want to speak to this shortly, and I'll give him the supplementaries, but let me just say this. First of all, I disagree wholeheartedly with the leader of the NDP's characterization that any challenges connected with this hospital somehow stem from the financing mechanism. I simply dismiss that. It is not credible.

Having said that, there are some concerns that have been expressed by members of the community, and I think we have a responsibility to find a way to address those concerns. I think it's fair to say that in some quarters there has been a loss of confidence in their community hospital. We have worked hard to put in place a new hospital. We have over 110 more beds than used to be there and 120 more beds are coming, but obviously we have not yet found a way to inspire confidence in the community in their new hospital. The Minister of Health will be speaking to that momentarily.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Premier talks about more beds. In fact, there are fewer beds than were promised to the people of Brampton. That is one of the issues, and that is one of the issues tied to profit-driven hospitals. My question is simply this: Can the Premier explain why thousands of citizens took to the streets in Brampton and are calling for the reopening of the aging Peel Memorial Hospital? Can you explain why thousands of people are raising these serious concerns, when you say that your new profit-driven, corporate consortia hospital is state of the art? Why would they be out in the streets marching if, indeed, your new hospital is state of the art?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman: Evidence of the quality of the building and the equipment there is offered in testimony by many. It is only the honourable member, best as I can tell, who asserts that the patient care issues there are a result of whether there is a mortgage on a brick or not. It's only him in his privileged spot, I suppose, that lives without a mortgage.

1450

We felt it was important to make this long-standing investment in the Brampton community, but we share concerns that have been expressed that the requisite level of confidence is not established there. We have an in-

investigator on site, Mr. Ken White; he'll be assuming even more vigorous duties. I will be writing today to the hospital board indicating the government's intention to move forward with the appointment of a supervisor, which will establish an even greater presence on the part of the government in ensuring that the circumstances there, which are a perception of poor quality of care, are addressed in a forthright manner. We'll make this a very, very urgent priority, I can assure all members of that community.

Mr. Howard Hampton: In Brampton we have thousands of citizens in the street raising issues. But it's not just Brampton. The Premier also promised that the Royal Ottawa Hospital, which the Conservatives proposed as a profit-driven hospital, would not be a profit-driven hospital. But today, under the McGuinty Liberals, it is a profit-driven, corporate-consortia hospital. One of the things they're doing is, immediately adjacent to the in-patient services, they are now renting out space to a private, profit-driven clinic that is charging patients up to \$7,500 for certain procedures.

Can the Premier explain where profit-driven private clinics that charge patients up to \$7,500 fit into a public not-for-profit medicare system?

Hon. George Smitherman: I'm very pleased to speak to the model which is seen in both the Brampton and Ottawa communities, unlike the record of my honourable friend when, for five years, he was on the world's longest bathroom break, when no hospitals were built in the province of Ontario. Instead, in both the Ottawa and Brampton communities, we have long-awaited, publicly owned, publicly controlled and publicly accountable hospitals.

I can say to the honourable member, as was the case when his party was in office, hospitals will, in ancillary space from time to time, lease that space to Burger King in some circumstances and the operators of clinics in others. This most assuredly is the explanation with respect to the space that the honourable member asks about in Ottawa. But at the heart of it, unlike the honourable member's record on this, the Ottawa community and the Brampton community have very tangible evidence of the government's commitment to their circumstances with gleaming new hospitals.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Premier regarding the potential \$200-million loss of taxpayers' money in the risky McGuinty government investment scheme: As you know, other jurisdictions are investigating who was advising government to make these risky investments in the first place and taking real action. For example, in the state of New York, the Attorney General has subpoenaed private companies to see if they were selling these risky investments at the same time they were divesting their own holdings.

Premier, please inform the assembly, what real and effective action have you taken to get to the bottom of

this mess? Because simply shrugging your shoulders doesn't cut it when it comes to the loss of \$200 million.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Perhaps the honourable member has some backing for that \$200-million cost that he has thrown out there, but that's the first time that I've heard it. If he has some information that he'd like to share with us, then I'd be only too pleased to receive it.

I read some more this weekend in a number of financial papers from across North America about these asset-backed commercial paper losses which have affected a number of banks and financial institutions, credit agencies and the like. I think I made it clear last week, as did our Minister of Finance, that Ontario too was caught up in this. The writedown, I'm told, will be less than \$100 million out of \$720 million. That will be fully offset by in-year savings on our interest on debt cost, so that there will be no net impact on our bottom line.

I'm also advised, as the honourable member knows, that this is the kind of investment that has been made for a number of years now. A number of organizations have been caught up in this, and we will do everything we can to—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Premier well knows that the difference between Ontario's approach and other jurisdictions is that other areas are taking real and decisive action while the Premier of the province of Ontario shrugs his shoulders and says, "Don't worry, be happy."

Let me give you three suggestions, Premier, you could immediately follow. First of all, would you rescind your November 2004 order in council that allowed for these risky investments in the first place? Secondly, will you pass a new order in council requiring investments to be rated by at least two bond rating agencies before investing taxpayers' money into it? Thirdly, will you call in the Auditor General to get to the bottom of this mess?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I want to repeat for the benefit of the member, and I think he knows this, that this kind of investment has been made for a number of years by a number of different governments of various political stripes. I know that the Minister of Finance and his officials within the ministry itself are now taking steps to ensure that this does not recur. I think it's the same kinds of steps that have been taken and are being taken in so many other organizations throughout North America—indeed, if not in Europe as well. I know as well that he looks forward to making a public statement about the nature of the changes we are making there to ensure that what governments of all previous stripes have done before is not repeated.

WOMEN'S SHELTERS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. It's a very simple one: Will the minister commit to restoring the core funding

cut from women's shelter budgets between 1995 and 2004 in Thursday's economic statement?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, I'm not going to anticipate what will be in the statement by the Minister of Finance this coming Thursday.

One thing I can tell you is that this government believes that one of the most fundamental rights is the right of safety and security in our own communities. So we are committed to increasing the safety of abused women and their children by providing safe shelters, crisis counselling and other important supports so that they can live free from domestic violence. That's why my ministry invests \$122 million annually in programs that help reduce domestic violence. That's a 27% increase over the 2003 funding.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is the minister who today on CBC Radio said that she didn't know anything about hundreds of women who are spending their nights in homeless shelters because there's no space for them. There's no space for them because this government won't pay its bills to the city of Toronto. So I ask you again: Will you start forwarding the city of Toronto the money that they've spent covering provincial shortfalls?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: This government is well known to work very co-operatively with our partners at the municipal level. For Toronto, we fund 390 violence-against-women beds in 13 shelters. We know that the occupancy rate averages about 86% across the Toronto system. So there is a coordinated access mechanism in place to refer women to violence-against-women shelter beds in Toronto and across the province. Women who are in need of support can call the Assaulted Women's Helpline, a 24-hour provincial crisis and referral service, funded by my ministry, that can help direct those in need to the appropriate supports. Our government also introduced a domestic violence action plan which is providing more than \$82 million over four years.

SECURE DRIVER LICENCES

Mr. Kim Craitor: My question is directed to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, when our government announced a finish date for our new, secure driver's licence, there were some skeptics, particularly from the opposition benches, who said that the secure piece of identification would not be ready by the end of the year. In fact, some in the opposition said it wouldn't be ready even for next year. I know that the security of Ontario is a priority of our government. Would the honourable Minister of Transportation please update the assembly and the people of Ontario as to when these new, secure driver's licences will be issued? Also, please outline some of the new security features in the new, secure driver's licences.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I want to thank the member very much for a very insightful question. I would like to inform the House as well that I was pleased to announce on Friday that the new, more secure, enhanced-security driver's licence is being produced by the province of On-

tario. It's newer; it's safer; it's more secure. In fact, the new cards were being issued last week and, as of Friday, we've issued over 15,000.

We've taken significant steps to enhance the integrity of the driver's licence card and the process of issuing it. The new card will set the standard for driver's licence security right across Canada. By incorporating leading-edge security features such as laser-engraved photos, signatures and personal information, a fine-line background, 2D barcode and ultraviolet features, we have made fraudulent Ontario driver's licences easier to detect and licences more difficult to tamper with. We've also increased the protection of personal data on the card to better protect an individual's personal information.

Mr. Kim Craitor: Mr. Minister, I appreciate your answer. First, I want to congratulate yourself and your predecessor, the former Minister of Transportation from Etobicoke Centre, for this on-time delivery. Knowing this government has met the target date for the new secure driver's licence, I'm hoping the minister would be able to tell this House, and in particular my constituents in the border communities of Fort Erie, Niagara Falls and Niagara on the Lake, and the people of Ontario, when we can expect to use this new secure licence as an official document to cross the border.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Again an excellent question. I wish to inform the constituents of the member from Niagara Falls and throughout Ontario that when crossing into the United States, along with more than half a dozen brand new security features which make the new licence more difficult to tamper with, to counterfeit or to use for identity theft, this new licence will also be the platform that will allow us to deliver a passport alternative. Ontario is working with the federal government to obtain and add citizenship information to the licence, as well as working with both the federal and provincial privacy commissioners to ensure all privacy concerns are addressed.

The US Department of Homeland Security, of course, is part of this as well, to keep apprised of their specific requirements as they develop. Last month, Homeland Security announced that they will be accepting enhanced driver's licences, enhanced in security, as alternatives to passports at the Canada-US border once new identification requirements are put in place to—

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

PHARMACISTS' DISPENSING FEES

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Minister of Health: The minister has just received a copy of a document that I received from the caregiver of a resident at the Trilogy long-term-care home in Scarborough. That document shows that the Torrance Compounding Pharmacy of Scarborough not only filled the prescriptions of this resident, but obviously filled their own pockets on the way through the process.

The billing record that the minister has shows that for the period from October 29 to November 29 of this year, this pharmacy charged a total of 62 dispensing fees for this one patient alone. A number of those fees were charged for dispensing a single pill. In many cases the cost of the pill, according to the billing itself, was four cents; the dispensing fee was \$10.99.

I'd like to ask the minister this question: Is he aware of these billing practices?

Hon. George Smitherman: I'm obviously particularly aware of the two-page list that the honourable member has sent me. I do appreciate the 35 seconds of notice. I haven't had a chance to fully examine that yet, but I would say to the honourable member that, through the work we did around Bill 102, one of those areas that we've certainly looked at and made some adjustment to is with respect to the prescribing practice for residents in long-term care.

There are schools of thought that suggest that moving towards a less frequent filling of prescriptions would be beneficial. There's another school of thought that suggests, because of the changeover that occurs in long-term care, that it is more advantageous to do it somewhat more regularly. But on the specific circumstances that are in hand, I'll be very happy to take a look at it and get back to the honourable member directly.

Mr. Frank Klees: A simple calculation tells us that the minister has a multi-million dollar problem. The fact is that this is a scam.

The question that I would have is, first of all, is he aware that this kind of billing practice is going on? In how many of our long-term-care homes across the province is this happening where one resident alone receives this kind of billing—four cents for the pill, \$10.99 for the prescription fee—69 times a month? Something is fundamentally wrong.

I'd like to ask the minister, will he order an investigation, not only of this particular bill but of that home and in fact of long-term-care homes across the province where this may well be taking place? At a time when our residents are only getting a \$7-a-day food allowance, he's allowing this kind of scam to go on across the province and stands in his place and justifies it.

Hon. George Smitherman: The honourable member is so intent on coming late to the party, he has failed to do any research or recognize that this was an issue addressed directly in the discussions around Bill 102. Your party stood in opposition to the alterations to get better benefit for the dollar from the public. That's why I'm very proud to say—and for the honourable member to hear this time—that, yes, that is an issue we're aware of. That's why changes are being made and why as—

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Why didn't you—

Hon. George Smitherman: Oh, and now the former health minister herself, who was a critic of these changes. But I'm pleased to tell the honourable member and all others who are interested, that is why this month we are moving to once-a-month prescribing for residents, exactly to get at this matter—another example of how

we're getting a better benefit for the public's dollars spent in our long-term-care residences.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is for the Premier. Given your interest in the post-Kyoto negotiations going on in Bali, Indonesia, will you tell this House when you will be filing an Ontario climate change plan here, with targets, timelines, budget and policies? When will you file that here for debate and adoption?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: First of all, let me say that I'm very proud that our Minister of the Environment is attending the UN conference on climate change in Bali. I know that the Minister of the Environment for Quebec is also there. I know that Canadians as a whole have a tremendous interest in discussions that are taking place there.

I know that the honourable member also recognizes that we've already laid out a number of aspects of our climate change plan. The most recent announcement went out under the Go Green title. It included our targets for greenhouse gas emissions: 6% below 1990 levels by 2014, 15% below 1990 by 2020 and 80% by 2050. It also included \$150 million to assist homeowners in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving energy and adopting green technologies. We talked about our Move Ontario 2020 plan, which is the largest public transit investment of its kind, a multi-year, \$17.5-billion investment in Toronto and Hamilton.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Premier, we saw this play out with the federal Liberals: lots of talk, lots of promise and, in the end, no action on climate change. Why will you not introduce an act for us to debate, and take action on climate change?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that the honourable member has a keen and sincere interest in this issue. I think he understand as well that one of the most important things we need to begin to do here in Ontario, and ideally Canada—and even better than that, North America—is to attach a price to carbon. The only way we can do that, I believe, is to put in place an emissions trading scheme. I would love it if the federal government would put that in place for the country as a whole. In the absence of that kind of leadership, what we're doing is looking at the regional greenhouse gas initiative on the eastern coast with some US states there. We're also looking at the Western Climate Initiative, WCI, when it comes to California. We're looking at what we can do as a jurisdiction that wants to be progressive and aggressive when it comes to addressing greenhouse gas emissions and their reduction. But we cannot really attack this effectively until as a nation we decide that we're going to put a price on carbon and put in place in an emissions trading scheme that is national in scope.

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR NEWCOMERS

Mr. Jim Brownell: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Ontario is one of the most

ethnically diverse places in the world. We are renowned around the globe as a place that welcomes newcomers and allows them to pursue opportunities to become integral contributors to the communities throughout Ontario. This government has shown real leadership in creating a Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration that actually helps newcomers settle and prosper in this province, enriching the whole province in the process. Minister, what support services are there to help newcomers to Ontario feel welcome, settle and integrate into our communities?

1510

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member for his question. Stats Canada has reported that more than half of newcomers to Canada settle right here in Ontario. The McGuinty government showed leadership in providing the ministry with resources to truly assist newcomers as they integrate into our society. This is why we passed the legislation that requires regulated professions in Ontario to have licensing processes that are fair, quick and open. This is why we have invested more than \$50 million since 2003 in over 90 bridge training programs. This is why we have invested more than \$50 million in adult non-credit language training each year. This is why we have fought for and signed the first-ever Canada-Ontario immigration agreement, and this is why I am encouraging the federal government to step up and deliver the funds of over \$100 million that they promised.

Mr. Jim Brownell: Such initiatives are certainly important here in the province. Newcomers bring a wealth of experience and skills that we can benefit from here in Ontario, and I am glad to see the government is continuing to facilitate new Ontarians in being at their best and being able to contribute to their new communities.

As more and more immigrants to Canada make Ontario their home, they often settle in large urban areas like Toronto. With well-established ethnic communities and greater resources, one can see the reason why. There is a great appeal, however, to living in small-town Ontario and rural Ontario that many newcomers often benefit from.

In my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, new Ontarians have settled in communities like Cornwall and Long Sault to enjoy the clean air, friendly atmosphere and great environment to raise a family. Newcomers could benefit a great deal from settling in such places in my riding, and Ontario's smaller communities will certainly benefit. What is your ministry doing to encourage newcomers to consider settling in smaller communities throughout Ontario?

Hon. Michael Chan: As we all know, the choice of where newcomers reside is a personal one. This is why our government established Ontarioimmigration.ca, a one-stop information gateway that helps both newcomers and potential immigrants to Ontario get the information they need about Ontario and its many municipalities. Newcomers can access practical information about

everything from how to get a health card to Ontario schools, labour markets and skills accreditation.

Ontarioimmigration.ca also provides the opportunity for municipalities to showcase and promote themselves to potential immigrants. Thirteen municipalities have signed on.

We welcome newcomers to settle anywhere in this beautiful province called Ontario because we know that when newcomers succeed, Ontario succeeds.

POLICE OFFICERS

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The town of Wasaga Beach has been advised by the Huronia West OPP detachment that their policing resources are being stretched to the limit. In fact, the detachment commander says he is barely able to provide adequate and effective policing in the area. As you know, this detachment also covers the townships of Clearview and Springwater on a non-contract basis. Under your government's watch, the detachment hasn't seen an increase of even a single police officer despite the fact that the population of this area has almost doubled and is set to soar in the years ahead. The OPP says it needs nine additional officers and one more civilian to provide adequate policing services in the area.

I have a simple question to the minister: When will you be hiring these new officers?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I'd like to thank the member for the question. It is an important question. Public safety is one of our top priorities, and I only hope that the federal government shares our interest in public safety and that the member across the way will help us as we advocate with the federal government to get our fair share of the 2,500 officers it promised five years ago and hasn't delivered on.

We expect that Ontario will get its fair share of 1,000 to 1,250 officers and that they will be fully funded by the federal government. We in Ontario are fully funding 1,000 officers. It's a commitment we lived up to. We're asking the federal government to live up to its commitment so that your community can get their fair share of officers.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I believe it was Jean Chrétien of the federal Liberals who five years ago offered the 2,500 officers, but anyway, your answer is of little comfort to the people of Wasaga Beach. This detachment has 64 uniformed officers. It's had the same number of officers since 1994, in spite of the fact that the population has gone from 8,898 people living in Wasaga Beach to 16,000 people today.

According to Mayor Cal Patterson in a letter written to you on October 31, if the town wants adequate policing, then your government is going to send the town a bill for \$1.34 million, which would result in a whopping 13% tax increase for the residents of Wasaga Beach.

The question that the mayor and council are asking is, why is your government shortchanging the Huronia West

detachment by nine officers and one civilian, and why is the town now being told that it has to pay for the additional officers when it's clearly your government's responsibility?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Again, thanks very much for the question. Let's make it abundantly clear: We want the federal government to live up to the commitment that they made, and then we'll live up to our commitment that half of those officers will be OPP officers. You can stand and you can criticize what we who believe in public safety are doing, but the fact of the matter is that we're calling on the federal government to live up to the commitment that the Harper government made with regards to fully funding 2,500 officers across Canada.

We expect our fair share. We expect 1,000 to 1,250 officers, and we have committed that half of those officers will be OPP officers.

HEALTH SERVICES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. For the umpteenth time, the Timmins and District Hospital is finding itself in a code red. There are no beds available in our hospital in order to accommodate new patients. Patients are forced to sleep on stretchers in the emergency for days on end because there are no beds available.

My question is simple: What do you plan on doing as a government to resolve this problem, and when can we expect it to happen?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman: The question the honourable member asks is a very good one. Indeed, Timmins has been experiencing some particular challenges, most certainly.

As the member knows, I was there in July. At that time, the local health integration network leadership was meeting with the folks in Timmins, which they've been doing. They should be in a position soon to make some announcements which will be a beginning. Subsequently, investment of the aging-at-home resources will be a further benefit.

But most certainly, to the people of Timmins and their local representative, I would want to assure them that we're aware it's difficult—we appreciate their patience in the circumstances—and that investments and help will be arriving in waves, and that most certainly building more long-term care must be among the solutions that are going to work for the people in Timmins. And we'll be on to that, too.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: To the minister, I acknowledge that, but you know as well as I do the big problem we have is that our long-term-care facilities are filled to capacity, the waiting lists are longer than we can deal with and the hospital is forced to take in ALCs to more than 50% of the capacity of the hospital.

I heard your answer, but my question is a very simple one: When can the people of the city of Timmins and area expect to get some resolution to this issue so that

we're not facing this again, as we have for the last four years?

Hon. George Smitherman: The reality of an aging population means this is going to be the kind of issue that we're grappling with really in most of our hospitals on an ongoing basis. It really is one of the bigger challenges. That's why our aging-at-home strategy invests \$700 million over the next three years.

I can tell the member that the people of Timmins should see the first sign of response very soon, but that over the period of the next months and years we would anticipate having to make a series of investments to catch up and address the circumstances there. Again, I acknowledge the challenges for the people working in the hospital and for the people in the community depending upon it. We'll be their ally in helping to make it better.

POVERTY

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Poverty is a major concern for many residents who live in my riding of Scarborough Southwest and for all people in Ontario. In fact, many reports have indicated how dire the situation has become. I know that we have made improvements to help people in poverty over the past four years, but there is much more to do.

I am proud of what the McGuinty government has decided to do to make the battle against poverty a top priority. Can you please inform the House, Minister, what the government's plan is to eliminate this unfortunate condition in our society?

1520

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'd like to thank my colleague from Scarborough Southwest for his question and also for being such a strong advocate for people living in poverty in his riding and across the province.

As you know, our government believes that helping all Ontarians is the right thing to do. That's why we need a coordinated and comprehensive strategy on poverty. Over the next year, we'll be listening and learning from people right across the province and beyond to develop a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy and to determine the indicators that will be used to measure our progress. We will be asking not only what needs to be done, but how people outside of government can be part of the solution.

We already have a very strong foundation to build on. The new Ontario child benefit created by this government will provide 1.3 million Ontario children and 600,000 low-income families with real assistance with the cost of raising their children, whether they're on social assistance or working.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I'd like to thank the minister for her response. I'm glad to hear there is a well-thought-out approach to this very serious concern. The most innocent victims of poverty happen to be children. This is extremely disconcerting because they are our province's future and they're suffering during their

formative years. Can you tell me what the government has done or what it plans to do to assist these most innocent victims in our society?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Our government will not take a simplistic approach to this problem. We are determined to make investments where they will do the most good. We're looking to make sure every child can be the very best they can be—we need them to be. That is why we will build on the progress we've already made. In addition to the new Ontario child benefit and the increase to the minimum wage to \$10.25 over the next two and a half years, in three years we've created 22,000 licensed child care spaces to expand the availability of high-quality child care.

The Premier has just recently appointed an early learning adviser to report how to best implement full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds. We're also committed to a \$45-million dental plan for low-income Ontarians. We're helping low-income working families with children access housing by creating 18,000 new affordable housing units and 35,000 housing allowances. We're committed to the reduction of child poverty—

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

LICENCE PLATE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. Premier, I direct this question to you because you seem to have taken public charge of this file, based on your pronouncement of last week, and you've been all over the map on this one. First, it was, "'Reverend' is out," and then it's, "We're thinking about 'Reverend.'" Then it's, "No, 'Reverend' is out again," and then last week you got up and said, "No, 'Reverend' is back in, but only if 'Reverend' was in prior to today" type of thing.

What I'm asking the Premier is, either the word "Reverend" is in or it's out. Now you're saying you're establishing this committee that is going to determine whether or not "Reverend" is okay on a licence plate into the future. Now, it's either in or it's out. The people who have "Reverend" on their plates are in. What about the ordained ministers in this province who want "Reverend" on their plates? Can we settle this issue and say yes to reverends at Christmastime in this House?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'll refer this to the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I again am absolutely delighted that the Premier has directed this question to me. It's very kind of him to do that.

As the member knows, some publicity has arisen this time around; I don't know why it didn't previously because he knows this has been going on ever since this program was established many years ago under the Conservative government.

What I have undertaken to do—because I see a problem arising, and I think he would agree with me—is that we're establishing an outside panel to review the criteria. I think there are some people who feel that the criteria are

not really applicable to 2007. It requires an update from time to time. There are instances where you and I might agree that something should be approved and something else shouldn't, so I hope with this new criteria that we will solve this problem in a way that's amicable to everybody in the province.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The fact is, what you've done is made it worse. You've created a double standard. Two people in my riding—Reverend Andy McKee, he's OK. He got his "Reverend" plates three years ago. You're saying that's OK. Reverend Ingrid Condie-Bennett, who has applied for "Rev" on her plates too: You're saying she's going to have to wait and maybe she'll be turned down. What you're saying here is, "Folks, we're passing a new law, but those who've been in the habit of breaking the law in the past, you're OK. You'll be able to continue breaking it. But for people in the future—we're going to be on you like you know what." That is not right. It is either OK to have "Reverend" on your licence plate or it's not. I'm asking the minister to say to ordained ministers in this province, "'Reverend' on a licence plate in the province of Ontario is OK." Say it today, sir.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm glad that the member has raised an issue which is of great significance to the province of Ontario, and I'm delighted to have the opportunity to be able to respond to this. I recognize, as I think the member does, that this is a very difficult situation. You and I might agree on something in the House once in a while, and this might be one where we would agree. What we have done is said that where people are renewing, they should have the opportunity to renew the plate as it was. In the relatively near future, when we're able to have people outside of government take a look at the criteria, it may well be that a number of people who, before, might have been denied under the previous criteria that were established under your government and subsequently under other governments would have an opportunity to have a chance once again. So I'm pleased that the member has raised it. I'm sure he'll get another good headline in the Eganville Leader.

CHIROPRACTIC AND PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to direct my question to the Premier. Since taking office, I have been swamped with complaints about the delisting of chiropractic and physio services. Chiropractic and physio services have been proven to reduce long-term health care costs. Can the Premier explain why he delisted these services for OHIP coverage?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to welcome the honourable member. This is an issue which this Legislature and indeed the people of Ontario have had an opportunity to give their views around. For our part, the multibillion dollars' worth of investments that we've brought to the public medicare system in our province have ranged from the doubling of the number of com-

munity health centres—something that your seatmate could tell you a lot about—to the expansion of family health care in the Hamilton community, which has meant that alongside our doctors are dozens and dozens of new health care practitioners.

We'll continue to look for all appropriate opportunities to invest in good-quality health care in Ontario as we look forward: that is, an intense focus on the reduction of wait times in our emergency rooms and more family health care delivered to people right in their communities.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'm not sure the minister answered the question. The most vulnerable people in my community are not getting the care they need. These people end up in hospital lineups. Providers of chiropractic and physiotherapy have long argued that people deprived of these vital health services will end up costing our health system more in the long run. Will the Premier or the minister commit to studying the impact of these health cuts and reconsider if the evidence shows they cost more?

Hon. George Smitherman: I appreciate, as always, opportunities on offer from the third party for spending increases. I note that they also had a proposal to cut funding for health care in their platform from the election that just passed. For our part, we're very satisfied with the progress we're making to build a better-quality public health care system in Ontario, and we're gratified as well for the support that was on offer from the people of the province.

As I mentioned, we have many things to do to build the health care system, but our focus as a government will be building on the initiatives that we've undertaken so far: more progress on wait times, focusing on a reduction in wait times in our emergency rooms, and delivering more care to people right in their communities through family health care—nurses, doctors, nurse practitioners working together. These are our priorities.

1530

MUNICIPAL TAXATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Minister, some 10 years ago, the Harris-Eves government subsidized tax cuts to the wealthy by downloading social costs onto our municipalities. For the more than 700,000 citizens of Mississauga, we saw social services costs loaded onto the property tax base that we have.

The federal Minister of Finance, who was actually a member of the government that did that downloading, recently said that his government was “not in the pothole business.” Cities, who are in the pothole business, watched their ratepayers' money go to everything but what those taxes were raised for.

Minister, could you please remind the House of some of the measures that our government has taken in order to alleviate some of the pressure on municipal tax bases and address some of the downloading of the previous government?

Hon. Jim Watson: I thank the member from Mississauga. We have a great team of MPPs in Mississauga who are standing up for their community and standing up for the province of Ontario. Those of us who had the pleasure of serving in municipal government do remember those sad days when the previous government was downloading what they promised was going to be revenue neutral, and we all knew it was not revenue neutral when all of the bills came in. That's why I was so proud when Premier McGuinty, in August of this year in Ottawa at the AMO conference, stood up and announced that the provincial government will begin uploading Ontario drug benefit plan and ODSP costs beginning January 1, 2008, which will end up saving municipalities, over the span of four years, close to \$1 billion for their taxpayers. We're doing the right thing: We're helping cities, towns and villages across this province.

PETITIONS

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Ms. Laurie Scott: “Physicians Needed in Small Ontario Communities.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Our community is facing an immediate, critical situation in accessing physician services.

“While the recruitment and retention of physicians has been a concern for many years, it is now reaching crisis proportions.

“Training more physicians in Ontario is certainly the best response to this problem in the longer term. We are, however, in urgent need of support for immediate short-term solutions that will allow our community both to retain our current physicians and recruit new family doctors and specialists in seriously understaffed areas. Foreign-trained physicians may help us to respond to this need.

“Therefore, we, as residents of Haliburton–Victoria–Brock, urge you to respond to our community's and our region's critical and immediate needs. For us, this is truly a matter of life and death.”

Signed by many people in my riding. I attach my signature to it.

MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. Michael Prue: I have a petition which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas more than 1.2 million Ontarians work at jobs that pay them less than \$10 an hour;

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberal government has failed to ensure a living wage for working families;

“Whereas people who work hard and play by the rules should be rewarded with the opportunity to earn a decent living and the chance to get ahead;

“Whereas the McGuinty Liberals were able to increase their own pay by 31%;

“Whereas an increase in the minimum wage to \$10 an hour would help Ontario’s working families earn a living wage;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario government to pass Bill 150, the NDP’s living wage bill, which would immediately increase the Ontario minimum wage to \$10 an hour.”

I am in agreement and would sign my name thereto, for what it’s worth.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It’s about the proposed ambulatory surgery centre to be located in western Mississauga. It reads as follows:

“Whereas wait times for access to surgical procedures in the western GTA area 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 the 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 wholeheartedly support this petition. I’m going to affix my signature to it and ask page Olivia to carry it for me.

FREDERICK BANTING HOMESTEAD

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

“Whereas Sir Frederick Banting was the man who discovered insulin and was Canada’s first Nobel Prize recipient; and

“Whereas this great Canadian’s original homestead, located in the town of New Tecumseth, Alliston, is deteriorating and in danger of destruction because of the inaction of the Ontario Historical Society; and

“Whereas the town of New Tecumseth has been unsuccessful in reaching an agreement with the Ontario Historical Society to use part of the land to educate the public about the historical significance of the work of Sir Frederick Banting;

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

“That the Minister of Culture endorse Simcoe–Grey MPP Jim Wilson’s private member’s bill entitled the Frederick Banting Homestead Preservation Act so that the homestead is kept in good repair and preserved for generations to come.”

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

CHILD PROTECTION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas Ontario is one of the few provinces that does not have independent oversight of child welfare administration; and

“Whereas eight provinces now have independent oversight of child welfare issues, including child protection; and

“Whereas all provincial Ombudsmen first identified child protection as a priority issue in 1986 and still Ontario does not allow the Ombudsman to investigate people’s complaints about children’s aid societies’ decisions; and

“Whereas people wronged by CAS decisions concerning placement, access, custody or care are not allowed to appeal those decisions to the Ontario Ombudsman’s office;

“Therefore, be it resolved that we support the Ombudsman having the power to probe decisions and investigate complaints concerning the province’s children’s aid societies (CAS).”

I agree with this petition. I have signed it, and send it to the table by way of page Quinton.

JOB TRAINING AND EI BENEFITS FUNDING

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario entitled “Fairness for Ontario Workers”:

“Whereas even though job creation in Ontario is far outpacing job loss, one lost job is one too many; and

“Whereas last year, the average unemployed worker in Ontario received \$5,110 in regular EI benefits, while the average unemployed person in the rest of Canada received \$9,070; and

“Whereas, on average, the federal government provides an unemployed worker in Ontario with \$684 less for job training than it provides for an unemployed worker in another province; and

“Whereas fair funding could mean additional investments in important areas such as enhanced apprenticeship programs, labour market integration for new immigrants and skills training for older workers; and

“Whereas Ontario workers deserve the same opportunities as other Canadians to improve their skills, find

meaningful work, contribute to Canada's prosperity, and support their families;

"We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to press the federal government to be fair to Ontario workers by providing equal funding for employment insurance benefits and job training compared to other provinces."

I affix my name to this petition. I wholeheartedly support it and give it to page Nikita.

STEVENSON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

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

"Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital needs \$1.4 million in new funding over the next three years to get its birthing unit reopened and to ensure that they can recruit enough obstetricians and health care providers to supply a stable and ongoing service for expectant mothers in our area; and

"Whereas forcing expectant mothers to drive to Newmarket, Barrie or Orangeville to give birth is not only unacceptable, it is a potential safety hazard; and

"Whereas Stevenson Memorial Hospital cannot reopen the unit under its current budget and the McGuinty government has been unresponsive to repeated requests for new funding;

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

"That the McGuinty Liberal government immediately provide the required \$1.4 million in new funding to Stevenson Memorial Hospital so that the local birthing unit can reopen and so that mothers can give birth in Alliston."

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

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: As I said the other day, I've got a bit of a backlog.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty has promised to make the needs of students a priority for his government and that students deserve to have a bright future with a good education; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty has promised not to give up on students or Ontario's public school system;

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

"That the provincial government work with the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board to establish an evening bus route from St. Joan of Arc High School in Barrie to the outlying communities. This would allow students to participate in extracurricular activities and help them to fulfill their potential, secure a bright future and receive the best educational experience possible, as promised to them by the Premier."

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

1540

HEALTH CARD RENEWAL CLINIC

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to read in a petition concerning health card renewal services close to Glanbrook residents. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas seniors, the disabled, families with young children and other Mount Hope and Binbrook residents are forced to drive to downtown Hamilton to renew their Ontario health cards; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario mandates that health cards be renewed on a regular basis and that an Ontario health card must be presented to receive OHIP health services; and

"Whereas the Dalton McGuinty government has increased taxes and fees on local residents but has not improved services;

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

"To work with the Ontario Ministry of Health to bring a mobile health card renewal clinic to the Mount Hope and Binbrook area so that residents can more readily renew their Ontario health cards without the drive to downtown Hamilton."

Beneath the signatures of Ruth Cowman and Jim Sackville, I affix my signature in support.

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."

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Jim Wilson: Just one more for today. I've got the wrong one here. This is a really old one, but people go to a lot of bother signing these things, so I think it's only right that we get them in and get a response from the government.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas, without appropriate support, people who have an intellectual disability are often unable to participate effectively in community life and are deprived of the benefits of society enjoyed by other citizens; and

"Whereas quality supports are dependent on the ability to attract and retain qualified workers; and

"Whereas the salaries of workers who provide community-based supports and services are up to 25% less than salaries paid to those doing the same work in government-operated services and other sectors;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario address, as a priority, funding to community agencies in the developmental services sector to address critical underfunding of staff salaries and ensure that people who have an intellectual disability continue to receive quality supports and services that they require in order to live meaningful lives within their community."

I would sign this and I certainly agree with it.

HEALTH CARD RENEWAL CLINIC

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm pleased to sign a petition and present it to the assembly about health card renewal services closer to Glanbrook residents. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas seniors, the disabled, families with young children and other Mount Hope and Binbrook residents are forced to drive to downtown Hamilton to renew their Ontario health cards; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario mandates that health cards be renewed on a regular basis and that an Ontario health card must be presented to receive OHIP health services; and

"Whereas the Dalton McGuinty government has increased taxes and fees on local residents but has not improved services;

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

"To work with the Ontario Ministry of Health to bring a mobile health card renewal clinic to the Mount Hope and Binbrook area so that residents can more readily renew their Ontario health cards without the drive to downtown Hamilton."

This is signed by a number of residents of Northern Breeze in Binbrook. With the signature of William and Patricia Russell, I affix mine in support.

MACULAR DEGENERATION

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of blindness in the elderly and is present in some form in 25% to 33% of seniors over the age of 75. AMD has two forms: the more common 'dry'

type and the 'wet' type. Although the wet type occurs in only 15% of AMD patients, these patients account for 90% of the legal blindness that occurs with AMD. The wet type is further subdivided into classic and occult subtypes, based on the appearance of the AMD on special testing. Photodynamic therapy, a treatment where abnormal blood vessels are closed with a laser-activated chemical, has been shown to slow the progression of vision loss in both subtypes of wet AMD;

"Whereas OHIP has not extended coverage for photodynamic therapy to the occult subtype of wet AMD, despite there being substantial clinical evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of this treatment in patients with either form of wet AMD. Untreated, these patients can expect a progression in their visual loss, with central blindness as the end result;

"Whereas affected patients are in a position where a proven treatment is available to help preserve their vision, but this treatment can only be accessed at their own personal expense. Treatment costs are between \$12,500 and \$18,000 over an 18-month period. Many patients resign themselves to a continued worsening of their vision, as for them the treatment is financially unattainable. The resultant blindness in these patients manifests itself as costs to society in other forms, such as an increased need for home care, missed time from work for family members providing care, and an increased rate of injuries such as hip fractures that can be directly attributable to their poor vision.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to fund the treatment of the occult subtype of macular degeneration with photodynamic therapy for all patients awaiting this service."

I'm pleased to sign my name to this.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

FEDERAL ELECTORAL REPRESENTATION

REPRÉSENTATION ÉLECTORALE FÉDÉRALE

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I move that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that despite the federal government's efforts to improve the representation of growing provinces in the House of Commons, the proposed formula is unfair to Ontario, and calls on the federal government to amend Bill C-22 to provide Ontarians with their fair share of seats in the House of Commons while maintaining the constitutionally protected seat guarantees of smaller provinces.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Premier McGuinty has moved government notice of motion no. 12. Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I rise today to speak on a matter as fundamental as fairness, as precious as our

democratic principles and as basic as the belief that Canadians living in one province have as much value as Canadians living in another.

Je fais référence ici au projet de loi C-22, un projet de loi que le gouvernement fédéral a déposé en vue de changer le nombre de sièges à la Chambre des communes.

I'm referring to federal government Bill C-22. It's designed to change the number of seats in the House of Commons. In a nutshell, this bill is unfair to Canadians living here in Ontario because it undermines the principle of fair representation by population.

During the 2006 federal election campaign, the federal Conservatives pledged to restore representation by population for Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta in the House of Commons. They would do this quite rightly to ensure that Parliament catches up to and keeps pace with growing populations in those three provinces. But that's not what Bill C-22 does from an Ontario perspective. Instead, it ensures that Ontario will continue to be underrepresented. In fact, it would make the problem worse over time as our population continues to grow. That's because under Bill C-22, and following the 2011 census, Alberta and British Columbia stand to get approximately one new seat for every additional 100,000 people. Ontario, on the other hand, would receive roughly one new seat for every additional 200,000 people. That is a formula for unfairness. After all, we have to ask ourselves, are newcomers to Ontario only half as worthy of representation as newcomers to Alberta or BC? Yes, Ontario would gain additional seats under this proposal, but the gap between our share of seats and our share of the population would continue to grow. And as this House has pointed out in the past, when it comes to Canada's finances, a fairness gap should be eliminated, not extended, and certainly not exacerbated.

We Ontarians are proud Canadians.

1550

Joignant nos efforts à ceux des autres Canadiens et Canadiennes, nous avons bâti à la fois une province où nous sommes fiers de vivre et un pays auquel nous sommes fiers d'appartenir. Nous travaillerons toujours en collaboration avec les autres Canadiens et Canadiennes pour bâtir à la fois un Ontario plus fort et un Canada plus fort.

Working with our fellow Canadians, we built a province we are proud to call home and at the same time a country we are so proud to call our own. We will always work in partnership with our fellow Canadians to build a stronger Ontario and a stronger Canada at the same time. But we expect to be treated as full partners all the time, and that starts with fair representation in the people's house, the Parliament of Canada.

Ontarians accept that Canadians in smaller provinces or those with slower population growth may need protection for their existing number of seats in the federal Parliament. In fact, Ontarians have adopted this very Canadian approach in our own province by protecting the existing number of seats in northern Ontario. Just as we

accept the need, for example, of Canadians living in Prince Edward Island to retain their existing number of seats in the House of Commons, so too do we accept the need of the people of northern Ontario to retain their existing number of seats in this Legislature. We Ontarians have never argued that the principle of representation by population should apply perfectly, but it must apply fairly. There is no principles-based rationale for providing citizens in Ontario with less representation than citizens in Alberta or British Columbia. We are all three large, growing provinces.

Keep in mind that this is about more than just seats. Fair representation by population is the best way to ensure the views of all Canadians are represented. When our federal government debates things as crucial as how much to invest in medicare, whether or not to put our troops in harm's way and how best to tackle climate change, all Canadians need to be heard fairly. So to those who would suggest that this is somehow some arcane, academic debate best left to the political scientists, I say this matters to every Canadian because it's about every Canadian having a fair voice in the debates that affect each and every one of us.

I have written to Prime Minister Harper expressing my concerns in this matter. I've also written to all members of Parliament from Ontario. But I bring this matter up here in this Legislature because I strongly feel we need to speak as one on this issue. We did that when it came to Canada's fiscal arrangements, and, in fairness, the federal government has moved towards greater fairness insofar as those arrangements are concerned. There's more work to be done, to be sure, when it comes to achieving fairness, but there has been movement. We need to work together now to call on the federal government to introduce an amendment to Bill C-22. We must speak as one in demanding an amendment that would ensure fair representation by population for Canada's largest provinces, and we must speak as one in sending a clear signal that Canadians living here in Ontario are entitled to the same representation as those living in BC and Alberta.

Nous devons transmettre le même message afin que tout le monde sache que les membres de l'Assemblée sont d'avis qu'un Canadien est un Canadien et qu'il y a un seul genre de citoyen dans notre pays, soit un citoyen à part entière qui a le droit d'être traité équitablement.

We must speak as one so everyone knows that this House believes a Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian and there is only one kind of citizen in our Canada, and that's a full citizen entitled to fairness.

So I say to my colleagues on all sides of this House, I believe we owe it to the people who elected us and we owe it to the country that continues to inspire us to stand for fairness, to speak as one, and to vote unanimously in favour of this resolution.

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

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I want to indicate as well that my caucus will be voting in favour of this resolution because we truly do believe in representation by popu-

lation. We believe that every voter in Canada and every voter in Ontario should have an equally weighted vote when they vote for their MPP or their MP. We also recognize that in areas where members represent a very large geographical area, there has to be some flexibility in that rule, and we have flexibilities in our laws, particularly at the federal level, to allow plus or minus 25% in that representation.

I guess what bothers us most about this particular resolution and the position that the Premier has taken is that while he wants rep by pop for the province of Ontario against other provinces in our Confederation, he doesn't want rep by pop for all of Ontario—and we can achieve that fairly well. As you know, I've introduced an act in this Legislature which would guarantee 11 northern ridings, and I've called for a boundaries commission to deal with all of the other ridings in Ontario.

I don't think many people in Ontario understand that we have 107 MPPs, while there are only 106 MPs in this province. That is because this government, in 2005, brought forward a Boundaries Act, without the advice of an independent boundaries commission, and forced their opinion on this Legislature in spite of opposition in this Legislature.

Interjection.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: We gave the Premier the floor, and I think we deserve the floor as well. If the member for northern Ontario would listen, I want to guarantee 11 members in the north.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Order. We did give a good ear to the Premier, and I think every member of this Legislature should anticipate that they get the same courtesy.

Mr. Norman W. Sterling: I think what some members in the north want do is create the illusion that we want to cut back the MPPs in the north. Nothing could be further from the truth. Our party has been consistent in our standing. What we want to do is guarantee the north 11 MPPs; we don't want to leave that up to future governments. In some ways, that's the same argument the Premier is going against in this particular assembly and in this resolution.

The other thing I would point out that the Premier said in his remarks a few moments ago, that the gap is growing—that is not correct with regard to Bill C-22, which the federal government is now debating. In fact, what happens with regard to their particular bill is, in amending the Representation Act at the federal level, it actually narrows the gap and gives Ontario more rep by pop than it had before.

This is an emotional issue at the federal level. This bill only affects three provinces out of the total of 10. All of the other provinces stay with the same representation as we go forward into the future. The only three provinces that are affected are Ontario, Alberta and BC. I note that if the federal government does not pass Bill C-22, Ontario, in 2011, would have 110 federal seats, whereas if Bill C-22 passes, we will have 116. I think we should

have more, and that's why we're voting for this resolution. But you can't have it one way at the federal level and another way at the provincial level. That is why we find this position of the Premier and the government a little bit hard to swallow.

Therefore, as I said, we support the motion of rep by pop and we believe that the federal government should move further towards that. We also believe that the provincial government should move towards that and has omitted that from their particular motion.

1600

So therefore, before I sit down, I move that this motion be amended by adding after "smaller provinces," "and that, in the opinion of this Legislature, the government of Ontario must demonstrate its belief in the principle of representation by population by addressing the inequity in representation at the provincial level by guaranteeing 11 MPPs in northern Ontario and creating an independent electoral boundaries commission to ensure Ontarians receive equal and effective representation in the provincial Legislature."

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Sterling has moved an amendment to government notice of motion number 12, which reads, "I move that this motion be amended by adding after 'smaller provinces' 'and that, in the opinion of this Legislature, the government of Ontario must demonstrate its belief in the principle of representation by population by addressing the inequity in representation at the provincial level by guaranteeing 11 MPPs in northern Ontario and creating an independent electoral boundaries commission to ensure Ontarians receive equal and effective representation in the provincial Legislature.'"

Further debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise today to speak about this motion put forward by the Premier, and I guess by extension to talk about Bill C-22, which is before the federal House of Commons in Ottawa. The motion before this House, as I said, was made by the Premier. At first blush, I have to say, and in totality and in the end, I think New Democrats will support this motion.

At first blush, when I saw the motion last week, it looked to me entirely as an issue of fairness. It looked as if the Premier, and those who were arguing in favour of having some 20 seats as opposed to 10 new seats in Ontario, were looking at all the right triggers. They were looking, of course, that there should be representation by population.

We are in a very strange country where that is not always the case. It is plus or minus 25%, but even within the plus or minus 25%, there are huge disparities. Some of that is a result of our geography because the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, places in northern Ontario and the northern parts of Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba are huge, enormous distances, where it is literally impossible for people to represent an area with 100,000 or 125,000 people because the areas are just enormous, and there aren't those numbers of people there. Of course, at first blush, I was looking that we deserve in Ontario to

have not 10, as is being proposed under Bill C-22, but 20 new members of Parliament.

At first blush, I also looked at the consultation, which I do not believe has been fairly put forward. I listened to what Mr. Van Loan had to say and, quite frankly, his comments in calling the Premier names, by calling him “the small man of Confederation,” were totally and completely inappropriate. I want to stand and say that I do not believe that the Premier of this province, in standing up for Ontario, was in any way diminished, was in any way “the small man of Confederation.” In fact, he was standing up for what is right for the people of this province. Even though I may be in opposition, I can tell you that there are times when one must stand up for the Premier, for his party, and for what he has to say. And this is one of those times.

I also want to say that I looked at the fair riding distribution and there was some merit in the comments that the previous debater had to say in terms of a fair riding distribution. Because if we are going to have a fair system of governance, whereby each representative represents a certain number of people, then it should be much fairer than the plus or minus 25% that we have, not only in the federal House, but that we have here in the province of Ontario as well.

I also have to ask, and I think this is a fair comment in view of someone who has said, at first blush, that this was an important motion before this Legislature: What precipitated the motion? Was it precipitated by what the Conservatives in Ottawa were planning to do or was it precipitated by something else? This is what I have difficulty with, because this issue has been before the federal House twice in the last 10 years. It was before the Chrétien government, which chose to do nothing in terms of Ontario, and it was before the Martin government, which in turn did nothing for Ontario and actually made the situation worse.

I did not hear anything from this House during those periods of time. I was not here during the Chrétien years, but I was here during the Martin years, and I do not remember anything being said either by the Conservatives or the Liberals at that time, or by the Premier at that time, on the inherent unfairness of the last assessment and the number of seats Ontario received. I wonder where the Premier was then. I wonder where this Legislature was then because, if anything, although this bill is unfair, it is fairer to Ontario, with respect, than what Paul Martin did to this province four or five years ago. It is fairer in terms of the seat distribution by actually giving us 10—not the 20 we deserve, but giving us 10—whereas under the Martin government that was not the case.

So I have to question why the Premier is embarking on this today. I would like to think it is for what is fair and just, but there are those who would opine it is yet but another smokescreen. It is to throw the people off in terms of the real issues here in Ontario, which I might suggest are jobs, the state of the economy and what is going to happen with poverty.

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Prue: I hear some rumblings in the backbench, even though I'm supporting you. If it's funny, I'll listen.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Nice tie.

Mr. Michael Prue: I know you love my ties.

I need to state for the record just a couple of things. First of all, the Conservative position is one that cannot be countenanced. It is, in my considered view, one of petty politics. It is one of their mismanaging this file. It is one of them looking at how they can curry favour in places where they are more likely to win votes, i.e., in Alberta or British Columbia, than they are here in the province of Ontario.

I believe that the Prime Minister has mismanaged the issue, and I believe that the Premiers not only of Ontario but of Quebec and Manitoba have spoken quite eloquently that this is not the right thing to do. Just to quote them as well, because I think we have some friends out there, friends in both Premier Charest and Premier Doer—just a couple of quotes that both of them have said in the last few weeks. Premier Charest has recently stated, “I understand the perspective of Premier McGuinty. We will work with Ontario.” Premier Doer of Manitoba stated, “I think we should take our time and get [the legislation] right in terms of the principles for this country. Otherwise, it could be perceived as a cynical exercise.”

We need to make sure that this is fair. We need to build consensus. We need to make sure that the people of Ontario are fairly treated, and we need a bill that is fair to all parts of the country. Most importantly, whatever is passed in Ottawa will have huge effects not only on this province but on this very Legislature because, as all members here know, whatever seats are awarded in Ottawa will, with the exception of an extra northern seat, be mirrored exactly in this House. So if we end up with 116 seats in the province, as this bill purports to do, there will be 116 members in this House. If we end up with 127 members, as the Premier is asking, there will be 127 or perhaps 128 members in this House. Therefore, what is being debated here today will have a profound effect on how well this Legislature works in the future.

It has been said by a number of experts that this House has failed to operate in the same capacity as it once did. It fails to act not so much inside of the four walls of this room, it fails to act in terms of our committees, because our committees are understaffed. There are not enough members to attend the committees for the committees to do the proper work in the House.

1610

It was suggested by many of the experts who came before the Legislature, looking at how this House can operate better, that we would operate much better were we to have around 130 to 135 members. I remember laughing—because one of the times that this was said was during the previous government's reign when the Conservatives were there—and the question asked by me: “Do you mean to say that if the House had not voted for the Fewer Politicians Act and we continued to have

about 130 to 135 members, this House would have operated much better?" The answer from the experts was yes, that that is the only way our committees can properly function.

So why I am asking the members to vote for this—and perhaps it is selfish as well—is that I believe that the 21 members who are going to come forward, should this pass, would be a huge boon and benefit to this House, to this Legislature, and to the committees that operate.

But I have to ask the Premier, and perhaps the other members of the House, one final thing in my speech and my submissions here. The question is—and we all know that it may be very difficult to convince Prime Minister Harper; it may be very difficult to convince his minister Mr. Van Loan—is the Premier willing to look at the proposal that the Fewer Politicians Act has failed this Legislature, that we are the only province in Canada that ties our provincial members to our federal ones? If that has failed the province of Ontario and in fact we should be having more politicians in the province of Ontario, and if that number should be 127 or 128, are we willing to look at unilaterally making that happen to us? We have the authority; we're the only province that does not exercise it. We have the authority to say that this Legislature needs 128 people. If the federal government is not willing to do so, I would suggest we should unilaterally show them how it's done and that the Premier and the members of cabinet take a very hard, solid look at whether or not we are going to act in that direction.

Last but not least, I'm asking that the Legislature pass the Premier's motion, and I'm asking that we all, in unison, vote for the motion that we tell the federal government we need more representation in this province in the House of Commons. At the same time, I'm asking the Premier to look very carefully. If this does not succeed, if we do not move that mountain—in the old adage, if the mountain will not go to Muhammad, perhaps Muhammad should go to the mountain—if we cannot change the federal government to do that, then we should be willing ourselves to change, it so that in reality this Legislature works best for the province and for the people of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. McGuinty has moved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that despite the federal government's efforts to improve the representation of growing provinces in the House of Commons, the proposed formula is unfair to Ontario and calls on the federal government to amend Bill C-22 to provide Ontarians with their fair share of seats in the House of Commons while maintaining the constitutionally protected seat guarantees of smaller provinces.

Mr. Sterling has moved that the motion be amended by adding after "smaller provinces," "and that, in the opinion of this Legislature, the government of Ontario must demonstrate its belief in the principle of representation by population by addressing the inequity in representation at the provincial level by guaranteeing 11 MPPs in northern Ontario and creating an independent electoral boundaries commission to ensure Ontarians receive equal and effective representation in their provincial Legislature."

The first question to be decided is Mr. Sterling's amendment.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): We shall now deal with the motion before the floor, government motion number 12.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Agreed to.

Hon. Michael Bryant: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House is adjourned until Tuesday, December 11, at 1:30 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1615.

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Arthurs, Wayne (L)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire au ministre des Finances
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (L)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Health) / adjoint parlementaire au ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Santé)
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (L)	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (L)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / procureur general
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (L)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
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. M. 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
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (L)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
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, Kuldeep (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

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Kim Craitor, Bob Delaney, Amrit Mangat,
Phil McNeely, Lou Rinaldi, Garfield Dunlop
Tim Hudak, John O'Toole, Gilles Bisson
Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Sophia Aggelonitis, Ted Arnott, Wayne Arthurs,
Toby Barrett, Pat Hoy, Jean-Marc Lalonde,
Leeanna Pendergast, Michael Prue, Charles Sousa
Clerk / Greffier: William Short

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Robert Bailey, Jim Brownell, Linda Jeffrey,
Kuldip Kular, Rosario Marchese, Bill Mauro,
Carol Mitchell, David Oraziotti, Joyce Savoline
Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Government agencies / Organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Michael Brown, Kevin Flynn, France Gélinas,
Randy Hillier, Lisa MacLeod, Julia Munro,
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals, Maria Van Bommel
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Justice Policy / Justice

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos,
Jeff Leal, Reza Moridi, Yasir Naqvi,
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Legislative Assembly / Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon, Bob Delaney,
Joe Dickson, Kevin Flynn, Sylvia Jones,
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio, Peter Tabuns
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Public accounts / Comptes publics

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Laura Albanese, Ernie Hardeman, Andrea Horwath,
Phil McNeely, Jerry Ouellette, Liz Sandals,
Norman Sterling, Maria Van Bommel, David Zimmer
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle, Kim Craitor, Gerry Martiniuk, Paul
Miller, Bill Murdoch, Yasir Naqvi, Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht,
Mario Sergio
Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Social Policy / Politique sociale

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Laurel C. Broten, Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo,
Helena Jaczek, Dave Levac, Shafiq Qaadri,
Khalil Ramal, Laurie Scott, Peter Shurman
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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