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Wednesday 11 June 2008

Mercredi 11 juin 2008

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Wednesday 11 June 2008

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mercredi 11 juin 2008

*The House met at 0900.
Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**COLLEGES COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING ACT, 2008**

**LOI DE 2008 SUR LA NÉGOCIATION
COLLECTIVE DANS LES COLLÈGES**

Mr. Milloy moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 90, An Act to enact the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008, to repeal the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act and to make related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 90, Loi édictant la Loi de 2008 sur la négociation collective dans les collèges, abrogeant la Loi sur la négociation collective dans les collèges et apportant des modifications connexes à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Milloy.

Hon. John Milloy: It is with great pleasure that I stand today to lead off the debate on Bill 90, which deals with the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act. At the outset, I'd like to give notice that I'll be sharing my time this morning with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Richmond Hill. With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take a minute to thank him for all the work he has done as my parliamentary assistant and all the work he has done on this piece of legislation and will continue to do as it's debated here in the House. The member from Richmond Hill has a long academic background, I think, having been involved in academic life in three countries, and he has certainly brought a great deal of his experience and wisdom to my ministry. So I want to thank him for his work to date and the work that I know he'll be moving on with.

One of the opposition members yesterday pointed out that Bill 90 is a somewhat lengthy and complex, even technical, bill. Although that is true, I think its contents can be boiled down to two main things. First of all, it gives part-time and sessional college workers the right to bargain collectively. Second, it modernizes the collective bargaining system in our community colleges. Those two pieces of the puzzle are really what Bill 90 is all about. I'm very proud to be bringing it forward today here in the Legislature.

I think the best way to explain its contents and to give a bit of context is to go back to the mid-1970s, when the

province of Ontario put into one act the whole system of collective bargaining within our community college system. Members, of course, are aware that it was in the mid-1960s that Bill Davis, as Minister of Education, brought forward Ontario's network of community colleges. It was in the mid-1970s that how labour relations would proceed was enacted.

One of the surprising anomalies of that piece of legislation was the fact that part-time and sessional workers, those who were part of the academic staff and those who were part of the support staff, were actually expressly forbidden from organizing; that is, from coming together collectively and, if they chose, from being represented by a union in their negotiations with management. As a government, we have recognized that that was quite frankly unfair and inappropriate in this day and age. In August of last year, our government made the commitment that we would extend bargaining rights to part-time college employees. That commitment was made last August, and at the same time we said that we wanted to get the best advice on how to proceed by seeking out expert consultation, by engaging with stakeholders and coming forth with a plan.

To do that, we engaged a gentleman by the name of Kevin Whitaker, who actually was here yesterday; he brought his daughter along, I think, to witness democracy in action and to see the fruits of his labour. Mr. Whitaker may be well known to many members of the Legislature and perhaps to many Ontarians who are involved in the labour relations field. He, in fact, is the chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, and someone who is very knowledgeable when it comes to labour relations and collective bargaining. We asked Mr. Whitaker to take a look at the act, to take a look at this anomaly, the fact that part-time workers were not allowed to bargain collectively, and to come forward with a plan.

He did yeoman's service. He went out and consulted with all sides. He consulted with the college sector, with students, with those involved in unions which in fact represent full-time college workers. He did a great deal of research into the history of collective bargaining in the academic sector here in the province of Ontario. In fact, I would encourage all members, if you're interested at all in this bill, to read Mr. Whitaker's report, because not only does it contain his recommendations, it contains a wonderful summary of the history of collective bargaining in this important sector over the last number of years.

On February 1 of this year, Mr. Whitaker produced his report, which we immediately made public. It was put on my website, and I in turn had an opportunity to go out

and consult with the same groups of people, the same stakeholders involved in the college system, and talk to them about his recommendations.

Mr. Whitaker's report, the thrust of which was to extend these bargaining rights and at the same time modernize the collective bargaining system, I think was greeted favourably by all sides. Of course, in meeting with stakeholders, there are always differences of opinion over this matter or that item or this technicality, but I think overall everyone recognized that Mr. Whitaker had done an outstanding job in terms of finding that balance and finding that middle ground of hearing both sides and finding a way to move forward. As I mentioned, he talked a lot about modernizing the whole system of collective bargaining at the college level, of making it more effective, of making it more in line with what goes on in other sectors, more compliant with what goes on in the current Labour Relations Act, which governs, of course, so much of the collective bargaining that goes forward.

As I say, Mr. Whittaker brought forward a very solid report, and after consulting with the various stakeholders, the decision was made that we would take his report and use it as the thrust of the legislation that we have before us. I want to commend Mr. Whitaker, not only for his hard work but, I think, for his wisdom and the good advice he has brought forward, and simply say to this Legislature that we're going to follow that advice with the bill we have before us.

0910

I just want to spend a minute or two on the details of the bill. Obviously, the most important part is the fact that it would extend the right of collective bargaining to part-time workers. Beyond that, as I said, it moves to modernize the system of collective bargaining at the community colleges, which I think has fallen out of line with what is going on in other sectors of our society.

This legislation, if passed, would create a new employer bargaining agent to represent all colleges in collective bargaining. Members may be surprised to learn that right now we have a government-appointed agency that acts on behalf of the employer during negotiations involving full-time workers. We simply think that's outdated. It's high time that the colleges themselves, who of course are involved in the negotiating, actually represent themselves and not have this intermediary.

The act further provides roles for the Ontario Labour Relations Board and the Minister of Labour, consistent with their roles under the Labour Relations Act; as I say, an effort to modernize and bring this act more in line with what is happening in other sectors of society. It streamlines the time lines for collective bargaining to encourage more proactive engagement by the bargaining parties. It allows for the appointment of a conciliator to work with the workplace parties at their request, which eliminates the current fact-finding exercise, which is more cumbersome.

Essentially, we're proposing that collective bargaining processes in colleges, for both full-time and part-time staff, be made more consistent with the Ontario Labour

Relations Act, while still recognizing the unique working environment in the colleges. I think this is an approach that would give all parties more responsibility for the outcome of collective bargaining, lead to a strengthened system of collective bargaining in our colleges and, I stress, allow the right for those part-time workers who are excluded right now to come forward and bargain collectively if they choose.

As I indicated, I want to share my time with my parliamentary assistant, but I'd be remiss if I didn't spend a minute or two talking about the college system in general. I believe the passage of this act is going to strengthen the college system across the province. It's going to strengthen collective bargaining for those workers who right now are represented in unions and will provide an opportunity for others to come forward if they wish.

Strengthening our community college system, and strengthening our whole post-secondary education system, has been a hallmark of this government. I've been very proud to have the privilege of serving as the new Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities under the leadership of a government and a Premier who believe so much in post-secondary education.

Community colleges perform a vital role in our province. They provide the skills and training that people need in order to enter the workforce. They've been very involved, for example, in the development of the second-career strategy that the Premier and I had the opportunity to announce the details of last week. This is a longer term training opportunity for recently laid-off workers, where they can come forward and, if they identify a job or career that requires longer term training, we will provide them with support. We will partner with them and allow them to pursue their studies at a private career college or at a community college.

The Premier and I went to Seneca College to make the announcement. It was welcomed very warmly. Once again, I want to highlight the important role that community colleges will play in terms of welcoming these laid-off workers and providing them with the skills they need to move on to a stable, long-term job. I must say that one of the highlights and one of the strengths of our community college system is that there is a degree of flexibility, a degree of being able to welcome people into the training program, of being able to work with them individually and make sure they go on their way. In our work with the community college sector throughout the development of the second-career strategy, they said, "We want to show the flexibility, we want to show the leadership to bring forward these laid-off workers."

That's just one example of the type of impact that community colleges are having across our province. They're one of the key parts of our post-secondary education system. I think all members of the Legislature recognize their important role.

What we're proposing today is, first of all, to modernize the collective bargaining system in which employers and employees reach agreements on their employ-

ment circumstances and, at the same time, extend it to a group that has been excluded for too long. I'm very proud of the work that has been done by Mr. Whitaker. I'm very thankful for the important input we've heard from stakeholders involved in this issue, everyone from students to administration; faculty, both part-time and full-time; support staff, both part-time and full-time; those in the labour sector; and other interested people who come forward.

I think Mr. Whitaker has come up with a very sound road map for moving forward; we've used it as the basis of this legislation. I look forward to hearing from all members of the House, but I also look forward to all members of the House supporting this bill, which, if passed, would modernize a system that quite frankly is in need of it.

With that, thank you very much. As I indicated, I'll be sharing my time.

Mr. Reza Moridi: I would like to begin by thanking Minister Milloy for his kind words. It has been a great pleasure for me to work with Mr. Milloy to serve our post-secondary education system.

Today we are discussing legislation that, if passed, would mark a significant step in the modernization and strengthening of Ontario's college system. Ontario's 24 colleges of applied arts and technology are a vital cornerstone of our post-secondary education system. Overall, our colleges serve about 250,000 students from all walks of life in every corner of this province. We anticipate college enrolments will continue to grow as more and more Ontarians choose our colleges as an excellent option for a high-quality education that will lead to a strong career, or for career development and personal growth opportunities with countless options in leading-edge technologies, the latest in arts and humanities, and many more important and innovative programs. From our young people just graduating from high school and seeking an exciting career, to older workers looking for career development or a new career; from seniors taking night courses, to the next generation of computer animators creating the blockbuster movies we bring our grandchildren to see, our colleges offer unique, world-class opportunities for post-secondary education.

Some examples of the excellent programs available include Sheridan's world-renowned computer animation program, developing animation in demand around the world and establishing Ontario as a leader in this field; George Brown's culinary arts program, producing great chefs and restaurant entrepreneurs; the veterinary technology and wildlife rehabilitation program at Northern College, teaching a one-of-a-kind course in Ontario for people who want to work in natural resources, zoos, wildlife refuges and conservation societies. All of these programs and the thousands more offered by colleges across the province help our students prepare for a strong future career.

Our colleges train students to use the most modern equipment and techniques, and employ a knowledgeable academic staff, often directly from industry. Many of

these academic staff work part-time, splitting their time between their own careers and helping students prepare for theirs. Many staff are sessional workers. These arrangements have proven to be extremely beneficial to all involved, and we want to ensure that this type of flexibility can continue. It benefits the colleges by providing access to teachers directly from industry with the latest knowledge and skills and with strong name recognition in their own fields. Most importantly, these arrangements benefit the students, ensuring a good mix of full-time and part-time, or sessional, instructors providing high-quality education along with insight into the dynamics of the workplace.

0920

These arrangements also mean that students can benefit from the valuable contribution of support staff who help enhance the learning environment. We believe that the modernization of collective bargaining processes we are proposing will help ensure that colleges are able to continue to attract and retain the best talent possible for the benefit of our students. Our colleges must continue to be able to offer innovative programs, as well as various options for education, including full-time or part-time courses, continuing education, co-op education, apprenticeship opportunities, training programs and retraining for second careers. Providing such a wide range of options for post-secondary education means it's more likely that our young people will continue to pursue their education. In today's emerging economy, this is vital. It's estimated that 70% or more of new jobs in Ontario over the coming years will require some kind of post-secondary education. In order to ensure that all Ontarians are able to succeed, our government is committed to ensuring our post-secondary institutions are able to provide the best possible education and training for students.

That is the basis of our unprecedented \$6.2-billion Reaching Higher plan. The proposed Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008, is a key part of delivering Reaching Higher to our college students. This legislation, if passed, would provide the first major modernization of collective bargaining in the college sector since 1975. It would give part-time and sessional college workers the right to bargain collectively for the first time in Ontario. This is an important commitment our government made last year, and I'm proud to see this as a cornerstone of this bill.

Further changes in this proposed legislation would continue the modernization of collective bargaining in colleges, providing greater ownership of the processes for the workplace parties. We believe that our proposal would lead to improved labour relations for colleges and to an overall better and more stable learning environment for students. This is the focus of this bill. Some of the ways we believe that this would be achieved include:

—Moving the collective bargaining responsibility of the College Compensation and Appointments Council, the government-appointed agency that currently represents employees in bargaining, to a new body composed of

representatives of college boards of governors, allowing the colleges to bargain directly with the union through the new body.

—Creating two new bargaining units, one for part-time academic and sessional staff, and one for part-time support staff.

—Establishing a process for certification of employee organizations applying to represent the members of college bargaining units.

—Continuing existing managerial and confidential exclusions from collective bargaining, as well as exclusions for students in co-op work programs.

—Empowering the Ontario Labour Relations Board to assume the same role it has with respect to collective bargaining in other Ontario workplaces.

—Allowing the Minister of Labour to appoint a conciliator or mediator, as is currently the case with respect to collective bargaining in most workplaces, and eliminating the current fact-finding exercise. This would help streamline the bargaining process and encourage negotiations.

—Removing fixed expiry dates for collective agreements, which would allow the parties to negotiate expiry dates that make sense for them.

—Reducing notification periods for bargaining from seven months to 90 days.

—Removing deemed strike or lockout provisions in the current act, bringing the new legislation in line with the Labour Relations Act.

Various other details of the current legislation would also be changed or deleted, making the college bargaining process more similar to the collective framework for other workplaces in the province.

These proposed changes would represent an important modernization of labour relations in this sector. We believe in these in no small part because we took the time to conduct a thorough and transparent review of the current legislation. We wanted to ensure that it was done right. Labour Relations Board Chair Kevin Whitaker was appointed to conduct proper consultations with all parties in our college system. After receiving written and oral submissions, Mr. Whitaker produced a comprehensive report this past February 1. He provided our government with wide-ranging recommendations covering collective bargaining in our colleges.

One of those recommendations was, of course, to extend college collective bargaining rights to part-time college workers, but the report also went on to make recommendations on how this should be done to ensure we can create a stronger and more stable college system that benefits all parties. We thank Mr. Whitaker for his efforts and for the constructive recommendations he provided. We believe this recommended approach is the best for colleges. We believe it will address the needs of workplace parties while still keeping the needs of students front and centre.

This proposed legislation is based on his recommendations. We believe that by giving college workplace parties the proper tools to negotiate effective collective

agreements, we are helping to build a better learning environment for Ontario students and a better, stronger, more prosperous future for all of us.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'll be given an opportunity in a few moments to speak on Bill 90 as well. There are a few things I want to put on the record, but, generally speaking, I think everyone in this House is very supportive of our college system here in Ontario.

We on this side of the House are very proud of it because, of course, it was established under the Bill Davis government and it's something that I think many communities and many citizens of Ontario have taken advantage of over the last 40-some years. I will be looking forward to putting a few things on the record in a few minutes.

Although I have a copy of the review by Mr. Whitaker, I haven't really had an opportunity, because I'm speaking today on behalf of our critic, but I will look forward to those kinds of comments and to seeing this bill go to committee and getting all the details worked out, as well as the funding issues around the bill. I look forward to that, Mr. Speaker. Give me a few minutes and I'll be speaking to it.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want to welcome the citizens of Ontario to this parliamentary channel. I am convinced they are awake. I am convinced that they have had a couple of coffees—just ready, tense and eager to listen to the debate in this Legislature. I will be speaking in a little while, for those who are awake to follow the proceedings of this place, and I will have a lot more to say to the minister and the government members in approximately half an hour from now. So tune in.

Mr. Mike Colle: I would just like to thank the minister and the parliamentary assistant for the work they have done in bringing Bill 90 forward. Essentially, it extends collective bargaining rights to the part-time workers, the part-time college teachers in our community colleges across this province. It has been done as a result of a comprehensive analysis by Mr. Kevin Whitaker, chair of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, and it stabilizes the working conditions and the labour relations in our colleges, if the bill is passed. So it is essentially something that will benefit the workers but will also be of great benefit in terms of bringing stability to labour relations in our colleges and, as a result of that, will make things better for our students.

We sometimes look at our community colleges as sort of an afterthought in many cases in terms of our universities and colleges partnership. But those of us who have had some contact with our community colleges know that right across this province, from Humber College to George Brown College to Seneca College to Durham College—especially Durham College; they do some exceptional work out in Durham. Not enough people talk about the great work done in Durham at the college. I hope the member from Durham does applaud the pro-

fessors and the students at Durham College, because we don't speak enough about Durham in this House. I hope he will do that and that all members from Durham will.

0930

Mr. John Yakabuski: I too want to congratulate the colleges in this province for the work they do. I particularly want to talk about one college, Algonquin College, particularly Algonquin College in the Ottawa Valley. With the minister in the House here today, I'm encouraging him again to get up and have a look at this facility in the Ottawa Valley, which has made application to build a new college campus right along the banks of the beautiful Ottawa River, in the city of Pembroke. I'm hoping the minister will take the time to come up to see what we've got there, see the tremendous work they're doing in a very antiquated building, some parts of which are over 100 years old, so he can understand how important it is for post-secondary education in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke that that application in the Upper Ottawa Valley gets funded by the ministry. It is paramount to growth and development in Renfrew county. We all know that we're trying to ensure that each and every area of this province has a fair opportunity in which to be the very best it can be and provide that post-secondary opportunity to the citizens of that area and all of those who may come into the area. It's not just about the education, but the entire economic health of the riding. There's a program going on right now where people are working to raise the necessary funds locally to convince the ministry and the minister that that would be an appropriate thing for them to do, to fund that college.

A couple of weeks ago I was at the convocation, and my predecessor, Sean Conway, was honoured by Algonquin College with an honorary diploma. I was pleased to see that. Mr. Conway spoke, as he always has, very eloquently, and hit all the right points. I'd hope this minister would hit the right point with Algonquin College in the Upper Ottawa Valley.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, you have two minutes to respond.

Hon. John Milloy: I want to thank all my colleagues for their comments. I also want to join with them in acknowledging the strength of our community college system. I can't resist taking a few minutes out of my remarks and respond to my friend from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. College and university infrastructure has been a major part of both the fall economic statement and our most recent budget, both of which the opposition voted against. He is standing up today and asking for more funds for a community college. There are many good projects across this province, and my colleague the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal and I have been working to identify priorities and move forward. But again, perhaps the member should be telling some of his colleagues that when they stand up and ask for tax cuts, tax cuts and government spending are not consistent.

I think it's more important today to deal with the bill in front of us. As I've said in my remarks, the first thing

it does is modernize the college collective bargaining system, and the second, equally important matter is that it extends bargaining rights to part-time workers at colleges both in the support staff and those in the faculty, those who teach. Sometimes at Queen's Park you can fall into the trap of forgetting about individuals, forgetting about the people who are affected by this piece of legislation. Several weeks ago I had the pleasure of going to meet with a number of college workers who had come here to Queen's Park to meet with a number of MPPs. I met a number of part-time college staff who came up to me and expressed their frustration with the fact that they had been excluded under this act, that they couldn't exercise their rights, and just had one simple question to me: "Are you going to change it?" I made a commitment there and then that we were going to introduce this legislation this spring. This is about these individuals; it's about giving them an opportunity that others have, and it is an outstanding way to move forward.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: May I have unanimous consent of the House to defer the leadoff speech from Mr. Wilson?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Simcoe–North has asked for unanimous consent that the leadoff for the official opposition be stood down. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the fact that you've allowed me to defer the leadoff. Mr. Wilson would have liked to be here this morning, but he had to take his dad to the hospital.

I appreciate being able to speak to Bill 90, An Act to enact the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008, to repeal the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act and to make related amendments to other Acts. I understand the short title of the bill is the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, 2008. I've just seen this bill for the first time this morning and I look forward to making a few comments on it. I can tell you that over the last three or four years we've certainly been lobbied by the part-time college sessional teachers. Roger Couvrette has visited a lot of our offices—I know he came up to my Orillia riding office. He's president of the Organization of Part-time and Sessional Employees of the Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology. I think Roger made a lot of sense, and we'll be looking forward to the debate in this House; we'll be looking forward to the committee hearings and listening to impact that this legislation will make on the college system, but of course funding will be one of the key areas of the impacts.

I mentioned earlier in my two-minute hit about the college system here in the province of Ontario; it's something that I think, when it originally started, there were some people who were skeptical about it. I think being the brainchild or the dream of Premier William Davis at the time made it very appealing to the citizens of Ontario.

I want to put on the record a few things about the college system in our riding, in particular Georgian

College. I can tell you that in the 40 years Georgian College has been in existence in Simcoe county, particularly with its main campus in Barrie, Orillia, Midland, Owen Sound, and now in Gravenhurst etc, it has become a real institution in our community and something that all levels of government, including the federal government and all the municipalities, are very, very proud to associate with. I can tell you it's one thing that I'm always proud to do: At least once or twice a year I get invited out to speak to classes of students at Georgian College. Usually it's at the Orillia campus and usually it's a day that I really enjoy, to see the optimism of our young people and the great ideas that they have as they ask questions and want to be part of our process.

I don't think there's any question, the part-time instructors have become a very important part of the whole college system. My only fear with this legislation is, when this bill is passed—and I suspect it will be passed—there will no doubt be additional costs; I wouldn't think that anybody would want to form a collective bargaining unit unless they wanted more out of the system. I suspect that it will cost the government of Ontario more money, and I'm hoping that the government will be there for the college system when they actually require this money.

I want to talk a little bit about Georgian College. In Simcoe county, we've got three campuses of Georgian College: the Barrie campus, the Orillia and the Midland campus. I want to put on the record a little bit about the three campuses and some of the things that both governments have done, since I've been the MPP, to enhance the work that they've done there. The Barrie campus was the main campus built in the county of Simcoe. I can tell you that I was very, very proud, five years ago, to be part of the opening of the new SuperBuild program buildings that they built at Georgian College in Barrie, when Dianne Cunningham came up for the official opening. I think about a \$24-million grant was given to Georgian College—federal, provincial and college money—to see this program proceed. It's something that I believe has been very, very beneficial to that community.

0940

The president of Georgian College, Mr. Brian Tamblin, has been a real leader, as college presidents go, in the province of Ontario. When I first got elected in 1999, I sat down with Brian and we had a chat about Georgian College in the area, the lack of funding and all of those kinds of things that occur when you have discussions with the presidents of organizations. I can tell you that Brian made a commitment to me at that time that he would help my riding, the riding of Simcoe North, enhance our two campuses, in Barrie and Orillia. At that time, in 2000, we had about 600 empty spaces at the Orillia site of Georgian College. Today, those are full. We've got an expanded veterinary technician program at Georgian College. They're working in co-operation with their next-door neighbours, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Ontario Provincial Police Association, who are both strong advocates of the college system in our community.

The Midland campus, back in 1999, was behind the radio station in a strip mall in Midland. Today, seven or eight years later, we've got what we call an Ontario skilled trades centre. It is something that we are extremely proud of. In our area, in Simcoe county, all the tradespeople used to have to travel to Kitchener, Toronto or maybe to Durham College to get their apprenticeship training. As apprenticeships are near and dear to my heart—because I come from a construction background—I was so pleased when Brian Tamblin and his team at Midland purchased the Industrial Research and Development Institute from that organization and now have an Ontario skilled trades centre in that facility. They train people in electrical, plumbing, recreational vehicles and marine mechanics, along with a few others as well. But what it has meant is that young people in our community don't need to travel to other communities, especially when many of the people are young and they've got young families, or with the high cost of gasoline, that sort of thing. It's has been very, very beneficial to our whole community. We want to plan on expanding on that. In fact, I've already made some inquiries into some work around heavy equipment. I think heavy equipment would be something that could be operated out of the Ontario skilled trades centre, along with sheet metal, carpentry and other trades like that. So again, we're quite proud of what is taking place there.

The colleges have been blessed with great staff. It's just a pleasure to go to the colleges and to speak to the students. I'm always impressed with the staff who meet me at the door, take me to the classrooms and let me speak to the students. I can tell you that one of our young pages here today is Murray Fallis. Murray's dad is an instructor and one of the key people at the Georgian College campus in Orillia.

I also want to point out that some of the colleges have really expanded their programs under other areas as well. Both the Orillia campus and the Midland campus of Georgian College in our community have an expanded university partnership program with universities such as York and Laurentian. Just a week ago, I was at a graduation class of about 30 who got their bachelor of science, I believe, from Georgian College in Orillia. They're building on that program, both at the Orillia campus and the Barrie campus. I believe there are now over 1,000 students who are taking part in the university partnership program on those two campuses. That is allowing our young people in the region to take a university program fairly close to home, although that's not to say they're not drawing people from all over the province and all over the country, as well as some people from outside the country who have come from international programs.

One thing I want to point out, in trying to impress upon you the importance of one community college in Simcoe, Grey and Muskoka, is that Georgian College is the largest college in Canada for students with work experience on graduation. For over 10 years, over 90% of the graduates of Georgian College have found work within six months, and in seven of those 10 years,

Georgian College has been in the top two. Last year they were number one, with 94% of graduates finding work within six months. They're very proud of that, and I applaud the efforts of both Brian Tamblyn and his team and the board of directors of Georgian College, which year after year tends to draw key people in the community who are interested in steering the college in a very positive manner, in a very positive direction. It just amazes me, year after year, the people who come to the board and give their time and effort in making this a key college in our community college system.

I wanted to say a word about Arch and Helen Brown, from Barrie. Arch and Helen are two very important people who have been business people in our community. They have continually donated and been key supporters of programming and the construction of facilities at the college. I can tell you that it means a lot to the whole community when you've got patrons of the community behind the college. When we need important help or support, they're there as key fundraising people to help the college out of some of the dilemmas they get into at times with new and expanded programs and the facilities they need. Arch and Helen have always been there, and I know they are two key friends of Georgian College in our community.

I also want to pay compliments again to our board of directors at the college. I know John is just finishing his term as chair of the board. Eric Broger will be taking over very shortly; I believe some time in August or September. Eric is a very successful engineer and business person. Sharon Bate, a former director of the Simcoe county board of education, and Gwen Strachan, a former deputy commissioner with the Ontario Provincial Police, are the kinds of people who are being attracted to sit on the board of governors. Day after day, week after week and year after year, they tend to lead the college in a very positive manner, and I'm proud of that. When I speak to them, they're always keen to point out the funding issues—the challenges they face as a growing university. I can tell you that each and every year it seems to grow. The government brags about putting billions of dollars into the college system; however, the college system in the province of Ontario is still the lowest-funded college system in the country. We are number 10 of the 10 provinces, and that needs to be corrected. If additional money is required as a result of Bill 90, I hope the government will be able to answer in committee hearings questions about where they intend to find the money for Bill 90.

0950

I also want to point out the other issues that I find are problems in the college system, which I believe need to be corrected. The minister, in his comments, talked about going to a photo op about the second-career strategy. Of course, we've lost a tremendous number of manufacturing and forestry jobs in Ontario. The hope of the government is that the second-career strategy will be led by the community college system and will be able to train people for other jobs in the future. I applaud the federal

government for putting, I believe, about \$1.5 billion of new federal money into this year's budget to help with retraining of individuals across our province. I can tell you that although the Ontario government never gives the federal government any credit for it, they're using every penny of this federal money for their second-career strategy.

On top of that, I also want to point out that the \$311 million I mentioned yesterday, new money from the labour market agreement, which has come into the system as of April 1 this year—I'm very curious where that money is being spent and how it is being spent. I mentioned yesterday that I'm getting a lot of correspondence, and I've had a few meetings with some of the literacy councils in Simcoe county whose funding has been frozen for 10 years. They're wondering how much of the new \$311 million they can receive for actually helping volunteers help people learn to read and write. If you're going to retrain somebody, I think that teaching them right from the very beginning how to read and write is a key step. I'm requesting the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to take it upon themselves to quickly come to the rescue of literacy councils, to help them increase their funding so they can help train more people in our province and in our communities who are unable to read and write. As I mentioned earlier, they're doing this with volunteer assistance and their funding has been frozen for about 10 years. They need to have some increases to carry on.

I also want to put on the record that the apprenticeship training programs are a very important part of our college system. I know that for both elementary and secondary schools apprenticeship training is becoming more and more important. However, we do have that roadblock of the ratios in front of us. It's easy to give an employer a tax credit, which I applaud the government for bringing forward; I thought it was a good idea at the time. But when there's a blockage in front of apprentices after they take a pre-apprenticeship program or go through the Ontario youth apprenticeship program—they're blocked by the fact that employers need a three-to-one ratio of journeymen tradespeople to apprentices—it's really having an impact on a lot of young people wanting to enter the trades.

We'll be continuing to lobby for that. In fact, I'm making a commitment; I don't want to stop on this. I believe it's important that we even go as far as having a stand-alone ministry of training, apprenticeship and skills development. I feel this is one end of the college system, or that particular ministry, that is kind of letting down our young people. I don't think there's nearly enough emphasis put on trades, especially construction and manufacturing trades, which are faced with this ratio issue. If we are still here next Thursday, I know that Laurie Scott will be debating a resolution to bring the one-to-one ratio back to the House, and I'll be here to try to support that as well.

As we go forward with Bill 90—and I appreciate the time to put on the record today the nice things about

community colleges and I really appreciate, Mr. Speaker, the fact that you've allowed me to say these few words today. We look forward to caucusing Bill 90. We haven't had a chance yet to get out there, but I can tell you that I'll be looking forward to the comments by other members today. We need to be careful that we do this right and that the funding is in place to handle the impact of Bill 90 when it is finally passed. I appreciate that.

Once again, I want to thank Georgian College and all the folks up at the Barrie, Orillia and Midland campuses for the great job they do, and Brian Tamblyn and his team for the great job they do in training and being the top college in our country. Thank you for this opportunity.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I have to say that the member from Simcoe North talked a lot about apprenticeship programs and his interest in them, from a personal point of view. I think a lot of us share that same view. I just don't believe that the government, or governments in general, are taking that issue very seriously. They pretend to, in the language they use, but I think there's so much more that could be done and needs to be done.

In the context of so many job losses, in the context of the need for so many tradespeople in Ontario and in Canada, our response, as governments, and this particular government's response, I think is not that great. It's okay—and I will speak to it in a few minutes—in terms of what the government has done; it's hardly historic. Yes, they've put in a few dollars, and again, I'll speak to that in about seven minutes. So those of you happy citizens who are awake, alert and eager to follow the proceedings here, in about seven or eight minutes I will expound a little bit on the issue of apprenticeship in terms of what the government is doing or not doing and what we ought to be doing in relation to apprenticeship programs. But I do believe the efforts so far have been completely inadequate and we need to do a lot more.

Mr. Reza Moridi: I would like to begin by thanking our colleagues who spoke before me on this act. Ontario colleges are making a great contribution to our post-secondary education system. I had the opportunity to visit three colleges since I became a member of Parliament and the PA for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities: Georgian College, Sheridan College and Seneca College. Actually, I attended one of the meetings of the board of governors of Seneca College.

Being a former academic and educator myself, I appreciate the great work that colleges are doing in this province. Some of our colleges, particularly some of the programs in colleges, have gained an international reputation. These are very crucial to the economic progress of our province in terms of training manpower for the future, for the years to come.

In our colleges, 250,000 students are studying. There are very many programs already in place in our college system. Stability is the key in any institution, particularly when it comes to educational institutions. The current

collective bargaining act which we have goes back 30 years, and it hasn't been touched in the past 30 years. It is time that this act be modernized.

Also, I must emphasize the contributions that the part-time staff and part-time and sessional faculty have been making to the progress of our colleges, and in training and educating our young people. These people—the part-time staff and also the part-time sessional faculty—need to be given the right to bargain. This is another focus of this bill. So this current bill which is in the House now has two main focuses: one is to modernize the old one, which is over 30 years old and hasn't been touched since then, and the second is—

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

1000

Mr. John O'Toole: I always like to hear the member from Simcoe North, who at the last moment was able to respond and bring some reference and respect to the college in his community. I'd like to say the same about my riding of Durham, which has been mentioned by a few people. I'm happy to have in my riding one of the very successful colleges, Durham College, which is in a partnership with the University of Ontario Institute of Technology.

I would say that just recently we had a little change. Leah Meyers, who was, I believe, one of the deputy ministers in the Ministry of Education, became the president about two years ago, and has just left that position. I wish her well. Don Lovisa is the new interim president of Durham College. He's been with the college since 2008, and he was acting as vice-president of academics. He actually came from the school of business, hospitality and media arts at Confederation College in Thunder Bay. I wish the new president well as well. But I should always pay respect to the citizens who represent us on the board: Phillip Simmons, Gerry Warman, Joanne Burghardt, Rhonda Christian, Aileen Fletcher, Carlee Fraser, Pansy Goodman, Karen Hodgins, Deborah Kinkaid, Doug McKay, Michael Newell, Charlie Peel, Bill Robinson, Darrell Sewell, Michael Seymour and Frank Wu. Frank Wu, the last fellow, is the director of planning for the municipality of Clarington. So you can see the very high level of people who try to add their value to the college system.

There was a very important initiative in the last budget, the second-career opportunity, the \$1.5 billion for training. Some of that will certainly flow to the colleges. So this is an important bill. I am in the midst of reading Kevin Whitaker's advisor's report and look forward to the debate.

Mr. Joe Dickson: I rise to speak in support of Bill 90, presented quite capably by Minister Milloy this morning. So popular is this bill that we're fortunate enough to have the minister's sister-in-law, the popular MPP from Kitchener-Conestoga, here with me to cheer him on.

When I think of special colleges and this bill and what is going forward, I can only think about Durham College, with several other adjacent colleges around the perimeter

of Durham region. I think of the communities that take advantage. Our residents have the full advantage of Durham College, from Ajax, Pickering, Whitby, Oshawa, Bowmanville, Clarington—and you can go throughout the entire region.

Durham College, as most of you know, has evolved from an old chocolate factory. At Durham College, everything is sweet: Education is sweet, the learning process is most generous and we're going a long way.

I have to tell you that I know a lot of teachers, lecturers and several friends of mine are at not only Durham College, but other colleges too—people like Mike Ryan, George Tripp, Randy Rainthorpe and Joe Bowdring, whom we lovingly call Newfie Joe, who focuses on skilled trades and works with several of the unions.

In addition to this new legislation that will make things better for both college employers and college employees, I have to tell you—my friend from Durham mentioned the immediate past president, Leah Myers. The member from Pickering–Scarborough East and myself have met with her many times and she continues to praise this government for the expansion that has gone forward and that hopefully, with this, will continue to go forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member for Simcoe North, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to thank the members for Trinity–Spadina, Richmond Hill, Durham and Ajax–Pickering for their comments. I want to sum up by saying three quick things. One is that when we get a chance to caucus Bill 90, we'll be looking forward to the committee hearings and the impact that Bill 90 will have on the overall budgets of the community colleges. We absolutely have to make sure that their funding is increased to handle any additional costs because, as I mentioned in my comments earlier, we are already the lowest-funded community college system in the country per capita. For the great work they do, that's not acceptable. So the funding has to be in place.

Second, I appreciate the comments by the member for Trinity–Spadina, who talked about apprenticeships and skills development. Again, I think it's an area, though, where we all talk a big story and think it's so important to do a good job; I really and truly don't think we're doing enough yet. Changing things like the ratios and taking the stigma attached to apprenticeships out of it and making the people feel more proud of the fact that they are in apprenticeships is important as well.

I want to sum up by thanking, as I mentioned earlier in my comments, the chairman of the board of directors, John McCullough, and his board, Brian Tamblyn and all the staff at Georgian College for the great job they do up in our communities. We're very proud of that.

I want to sum up by thanking everyone for the opportunity to speak to Bill 90.

In the audience today—I didn't get a chance to do this earlier, but I want to introduce a good friend of mine,

Grady Cragg, and my assistant, Gaggan Gill, and Shane, who is Grady Cragg's little brother.

Thank you very much for this opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's good to speak to Bill 90 as the NDP critic on post-secondary education issues.

Welcome to this political forum. We are on live. It's 10:05, and I am convinced that people are indeed awake, have had their strong coffee and/or espresso in the morning, and are eager to listen to us. That's why the government changed the hours in this place. They must have realized, the government members, that people at home were bored, that they must have been really bored and were looking for something exciting to get up to in the morning at 9 o'clock. I know there are a lot of eager beavers, out-of-town Liberal MPPs who have apartments in downtown Toronto, and they're so bored they want to get here at 9 o'clock. They even want to get here at 8 o'clock, because they don't have anything to do, so alone are they in downtown Toronto, the members from outside Toronto.

It's possible that these are the people who persuaded the House leader to change the hours, because 1 o'clock or 1:30 is just too late. We needed to get up early and work hard and harder so that you could get to your morning meetings at 8 o'clock, because what would you be doing at home except sleeping, right? Those of you who really wanted to work must have persuaded the House leader that we need to get up really early, because you were tired of being bored and alone in your apartments. So it's possible that some of these members were the ones who persuaded the House leader to change the hours in this place. God bless them.

Anyway, if some of you are awake and watching, just drop me a little note telling me how excited you are that the Liberals changed the hours. I would be happy to know how you feel about this particular topic.

In the beginning I thought, how are we going to be able to speak so early in the morning? It's like singing in the morning. I used to sing. I used to imitate Tom Jones when I was a young man, but I can tell you, I could never, ever sing in the morning—I couldn't. You need to warm up. It's just like speeches; you need to warm up. You need the whole hour to speak, because you can't just do it in two minutes here. You understand, Jim, what I'm talking about. Yes. So I thought, how are you going to have the excitement to be able to speak, the ability to be still awake, or be awake, at 9 o'clock in the morning and be rational? But I know we make an effort around here. We do, Herculean; no doubt. But we do our best, and that's what people like me do in the morning when we are here to do the business of the House.

I'm here as a speaker today on Bill 90 and to say it took a long, long time. The Liberals rationalize it by saying, "We have to get it right," and then they can appear like getting it right really does take two long years. It doesn't take that long. I'm going to tell you in a couple of moments why it takes that long.

To hear the member from Richmond Hill and the minister and even the member for Ajax–Pickering and all that, you get the impression that they really had to take time. You’ve just got to do it right and you appoint people—Mr. Whitaker, a nice man indeed. Of course he did his report and the government had that report in their hands for months and months, but the minister needs to reflect on it because you’ve got to do it right and you’ve got to take your time. Correct, member from Richmond Hill?

1010

Mr. Reza Moridi: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That’s a silly rationale, right? We all know it, and the citizens who are awake this morning know that as well. Those who are paying attention know that it’s a political gain. Instead of just being frank and saying, “Why are we delaying?” which I will explain in a moment, they simply use subterfuge; they dissimulate as well as they possibly can in order to be able to get a different kind of political message. The message clearly is, “Delay, delay, delay as long as you can,” because what this bill will do is increase the cost of the colleges, which eventually will increase the cost to the government.

This is not a bad thing. We believe college workers need to be better paid, need to have better services for the work they do. That’s not the problem. The government understands that the reason for the delay is that it’s going to create some problems for the government. It’ll create some headaches for colleges, and directly and indirectly it will create a headache for le gouvernement. They may be able to deal with that, because now the bill is before us. They’ve had to take their lumps, as it were, and they will deal with it, but make no mistake about it: The delay has all to do with greater cost, and that’s what the government was trying to avoid for a long time, until they could no longer avoid it.

OPSECAAT president Roger Couvrette has been working for two long years with his members to try to give them the right to organize and bargain collectively; a right that has been denied to them for 33 years. That’s a long time. Governments can wait, but part-time college teachers couldn’t wait that long. We made them wait a long time, and if not for the pressure, this Liberal government would have made them wait much, much longer. Roger Couvrette: I give him a great deal of praise because it was he, with the organizing drive and OPSEU behind them, who was able to mobilize not just public opinion but the 17,000 part-time college workers and support staff in order to gain the right to bargain collectively. They pressed and they pushed and they understood that governments are about political pressure. Governments are not necessarily innately good; they’re not. They become good when pressured by people to do good. Otherwise most governments, especially Liberals, will avoid dealing with any particular issue because they don’t want any trouble with anyone. That’s why they sit so happily in the middle as often and as long as they possibly can, so as to avoid headaches on the right and on

the left. So they quietly, surreptitiously slither under that carpet as best they can for as long as they can.

Governments, especially Liberals, are not innately good, but we have to force them year after year to do some good. Eventually they deliver, as you see them today, where they say, “We’re finally delivering”—not “finally”; they wouldn’t say that. They’re praising the college system and college presidents; they’re praising anybody they possibly can. Before this bill there was not a peep about college presidents, about colleges, about funding—not a peep. They were as silent as you could possibly imagine. You couldn’t hear a word from any Liberal before this bill. Now that the bill is before us, they’re saying how wonderful the government is, how wonderful the colleges are, all the great work they’re doing together and how much more they need to do. Correct?

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The member for Richmond Hill is going to get two more minutes in a moment to say the very same things I’m repeating right now. The story isn’t new. The script is already written, has been written for years and years, and they recycle the same script over and over again. There is no creativity in governments whatsoever.

The Minister of Transportation knows this because he’s been in government, in opposition, in government. He loves this thing. He criticizes governments and, once in, he criticizes the opposition. It’s just the way it goes. I think that’s why people don’t like politicians too much. If anything, we should review why people hate us. There’s never been a study by any political group that asks, “Why do people hate politicians?” We avoid that as much and as best and as long as we can, but that’s a real problemo that we have in this place: People do not like politicians. In the afternoon, when I’m given the opportunity, I hope, to speak to the bill that will look at how we reform elections and so on, I hope to be able to say a few more words on that topic.

That is a topic we should have a select committee on, to review the reasons why people seem to hate the political process and politicians of all stripes. They don’t just hate Liberals or Tories, they actually hate all of us. That dislike is equally distributed. Nobody looks at the reasons why, and all I’m saying to my Liberal colleagues is that we should. I’m saying this not for myself, but we should do it for ourselves and look at the reasons why. But that’s another matter for another bill, for another afternoon.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yes, of course, there’s so much to say.

I was saying that people like me want to praise Roger Couvrette from OPSECAAT for the organizing drive, because it took two long years to persuade Liberal MPPs that they should present the bill. They were cagey for a long, long time. The minister would constantly say, “We’re doing it, we’re doing it and we’re doing it.” You understand, Speaker, because you’re part of the Liberal

caucus. How long can you delay before you look bad? So finally the minister said, "I was at a reception just a month ago"—I was at the same reception, by the way. He leads us to believe that that was the moment when he decided he could no longer wait and that bill had to be presented; that moment of lucidity, that moment where people are speaking to you and you say, "My God, I've harmed someone. It isn't good. I have been touched by the college teachers." On that particular day—no other day, because he never met any other college teacher before—when OPSECAAT had a reception and he was able to speak one to one, he was touched at that particular moment, so he could no longer deny or delay.

Do you believe that? Come on. It's such a sob story. How can you believe stories like that? How could you even say it? Come on. I don't believe it, and if I don't believe it, do you think anybody else is going to believe it? If you delay for two years and you had the Whitaker report in your office for so long, you then have a moment of eureka when you meet the OPSECAAT staff? Please.

I'm just raising that as a way to help the minister out. Don't embarrass yourselves in that way. Just don't say it. Simply say, "This is an historical moment," which you always say, right? "This is historic"—you didn't use that word, by the way. I was a little bit surprised. How come you didn't use the word "historic"? I was waiting for that, and none of you used it. Maybe the member for Richmond Hill will use it after my speech. Just say that. Don't say this other stuff that makes governments look silly at times.

1020

Look, governments used part-time teachers as cheap labour. They did that through the college system, through the colleges. Colleges, not having enough money from governments, have to resolve their financial problems in all sorts of ways. So rather than hiring full-time workers, they hired more and more part-time workers for the longest time. In fact, if there wasn't any pressure, you would hire—you government; you colleges—more and more part-time workers. Do you know that half of the college teachers are part-time? That fact ought to startle you a little bit. Half of the college staff are part-timers. How could that be? And about 20% of university teachers are part-time. It varies from university to university. Why do they do that, do you think? To save pecunia; it's all about the pecunia. Cheap labour is about making sure people don't get the benefits that they're entitled to, making them work harder than they would like because they have to have one job or two, or one full-time job part-time in that college, or two jobs in that college and another college, or possibly three colleges, in terms of being able to make ends meet and having full-time hours. Part-time college teachers have been exploited for a long, long time, and there were more and more of them every year to exploit.

Even the ILO, otherwise known as the International Labour Organization, ruled that such workers be given the legal right to bargain collectively and urged the McGuinty Liberals to let this happen. This is the Inter-

national Labour Organization getting involved in this particular issue, the International Labour Organization saying to McGuinty that they should have a right to bargain collectively. That was a couple of years ago; that was at least two years ago.

You understand that there have been a number of people pressing. It wasn't just the International Labour Organization; it was also the Supreme Court of Canada who waded into the issue, where they confirmed a year ago that the right of freedom of association is a right in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. That was yet another pressure point for the McGuinty government. The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the right of freedom of association is something that is embedded in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and therefore part-time college teachers have the right to bargain collectively. And they haven't had that right for 33 years. So you have the International Labour Organization, you have the Supreme Court of Canada and you have college teachers through OPSECAAT. You had even little people like Marchese, who introduced a bill in this Legislature twice, Bill 13, urging the Liberal government to pass a bill that would give part-time workers and support staff the right to bargain collectively. They dismissed my bill, of course. There's no reference by the member for Richmond Hill or the Minister of Education that I introduced a bill here twice, speaking to the same right.

I had hoped we would have had the government move on that a little more quickly—not too much, of course, because we wouldn't want to tire the Liberals out too much, but just a little bit.

We had hoped that the bill would not be so complex. You remember that yesterday I showed you three documents that pertain to this particular bill. It was thick; it was a thick document. We had asked the minister, "Could we have a copy of the bill so that we could see it in advance?" The ministry staff said, "No, we can't give it to you." We asked for the courtesy of seeing the bill before 3 o'clock, when the minister was about to announce Bill 90. We were given no such courtesy to be able to view the bill. I'm talking about courtesy here. Why would it be such a big deal for the government to allow the critic, and the critics, to see the bill in advance—an hour in advance, two hours in advance, in the morning, the day before? Why would government deny the opposition that basic courtesy, not to speak of rights, to see the bill, which would allow us to prepare ourselves more effectively? And they don't do it. Why do they do that continually? Why do governments do that as a way of punishing the opposition? It's not as if it's going to change your bill in any way. It's not as if, by allowing me to read it, I'm going to be able to prevent your bill from happening. You have a majority in this place. It's not as if I could do anything to undermine you as a government. Yet you refused to allow us to see the bill.

So, good folks, good citizens of Ontario watching this program, sometimes I am as frustrated as you. You have your reasons for not having great affection for us, and sometimes I have similar reasons for not having much

affection for us as well. Sometimes the reasons are very similar. Make no mistake about it: The government delayed because they wanted cheap labour. They considered part-time college teachers as part of the way you do business: You underfund the college system and the university system. Colleges do not have any money, do not have sufficient dollars, and therefore they have to continue with the practice of having part-time workers unable to collectively bargain. That's what that was about.

The context of this is very simple, and I want to put to you the context, if I can, as a way of explaining the seriousness of the underfunding of our university and college system. I'm reading from a document called the CAUT Almanac of Post-Secondary Education in Canada, published by the Canadian Association of University Teachers. They have some interesting things to say about financing of universities and colleges. I know that this will be dismissed by the Liberals, and I'll explain why they will try to do that. But it's hard to alter the facts. "Provincial expenditures on post-secondary education"—they do a comparison in terms of what they got, in millions, in 1992-93, when the NDP was in government, with what they're getting in 2005-06 from the Liberal government. Ontario was getting \$4,393 per student, and in 2005-06 they were getting \$4,649. Understand the difference here: 1992-93 and 2005-06; there's a difference of 12, 13 years there. The difference between what we were giving and what the government is giving today is minuscule. So over the 12-year period, financing has not grown very much. That's how bad it is.

Here's another statistic from the same document: "Provincial expenditures on post-secondary education as a share of total provincial expenditures". In 1992-93 in Ontario it was 5.8%; in 2005-06 it was 5.2%. So on expenditures on post-secondary education as a share of total provincial expenditures, we're getting less today than we did in 1992-93.

Hon. David Caplan: Okay, we'll cut health care, then.

1030

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No. You'll have an opportunity, Mr. Caplan, to speak shortly. It's not what I want; it's what the facts are.

Another statistic, provincial expenditures on post-secondary education as a share of provincial gross domestic product: In Ontario, in 1992-93, it was 1.20; in 2005-06, it was 0.86—much less today than in 1992-93. You often have Liberals standing up saying, "We're giving more money than any other government in the history of this province."

Applause.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They delude themselves so badly, because when I read the facts, they pretend not to hear them. So the minister claps to this delusional kind of statistical information and forgets to listen to the facts.

The other fact, mon ami monsieur le ministre, who is able to listen to these numbers: Provincial government transfers to colleges and universities per FTE student

enrolment, in 1992-93 versus 2004-05—in 1993, Ontario was giving \$10,346, and in 2004-05, it was \$7,080.

Mr. Minister, does this give you a good sense of the problem that we are in and the serious underfunding of our college and university system? Because if the facts don't help you, I don't know what will. I know you can make it up; I know you do. I know you will have an opportunity—

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You will have an opportunity to be able to state—

Hon. John Milloy: Tell us about the NDP bill. Why didn't you pass it?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, no. I'm talking about you, Minister, because you have the wheels today. You've had the wheels for four long years, and you still have the wheels today. They call it the limousine today, or some other car, maybe a hybrid. But when you've got the wheels, you are the one in charge. Now it's your job to simply say—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: "Where was Bob Rae then?" He's in the Liberal Party. That's where he is. Bob Rae has joined your ranks, a bright man who has decided to join the ranks of the Liberal Party. So if you want to attack somebody, be careful how you do it, because he's now in your ranks.

But, Minister, if you look at the funding that I just quoted, because you heard some of it and you didn't hear the other part, on all ways of determining funding, in 1992-93, we were giving more than you were, and we were just getting over a recession. You have had 10 or 12 good economic years and you're giving less today than we were giving in a recessionary period. That's nothing to be proud of, and we did that with Bob Rae. Yes, then we did it with him. So you have nothing to be proud of. In fact, it's almost embarrassing, but that's okay. You don't have to talk about the facts. It's not a big deal. You can talk about something else. Make 'em up. Do what you like, and you do.

So we have OPSECAAT to honour. We have OPSEU president Warren "Smokey" Thomas to honour because he's taken on this fight to represent the workers. In fact, OPSEU have signed union cards and the union applied to the Ontario Labour Relations Board to be certified as their bargaining unit in April, and you know what, Minister? You may not know this—oh, sure you do. The government's lawyers argued against the college workers' right to bargain collectively. That was the Attorney General, the same man who used to be the minister of post-secondary education. He sent his lawyers to argue against the college workers' right to bargain collectively. It was a moment of embarrassment for the Attorney General, and why wouldn't it be? As a former minister of post-secondary education, to have to send a lawyer to argue against OPSEU, against the right of workers to bargain collectively, was not a happy moment for the Liberal government.

We pointed that out in one of our questions in this Legislature, and I am sure the minister tried to contain his embarrassment as best he could, pretending it didn't even exist, pretending the question wasn't even asked. He even pretends now, while he's in this Legislature, not to listen to my points. That's okay. I understand that. I would have been embarrassed too.

Hon. John Milloy: Are you going to vote for the bill?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm waiting for you to talk about the facts again, Minister. I'm looking forward to you and the member for Richmond Hill talking about the facts.

I wanted to point out, Attorney General—I think you're listening again—that you must have had a very unhappy moment at that particular time, when OPSEU went in front of the Labour Relations Board and you sent in your lawyers to fight against them. You understand what I mean. I wanted to point it out to the good citizens of Ontario who are watching this political channel on a regular basis. Rain or shine, day or night, they are there, ready and alert and awake, having their popcorn and their beer and wine in the afternoon and coffee in the morning, because they are so excited to watch this parliamentary channel. Yes, siree. So much for the Attorney General and this fight against OPSEU; so much for the current minister.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: How did I get involved in that?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Hey, ho. Hark, he's awake. Hark ye, he awakens. I knew that he was listening. All it took was the right stimuli to get him going. There, you see, I stirred him up. He's awake.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Is this about those workers you ignored for five years?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Attorney General, careful. The Speaker's going to say you're not in your seat, so just be careful. But I want you to have two minutes.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, Speaker, don't do that publicly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Trinity–Spadina would know that heckling is out of order no matter where you're sitting.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I understand that Liberals need a helping hand. I understand that. I don't heckle. This is a discussion and a debate with my Liberal friends to the left, behind me, in front of me. It's a constant debate, which I enjoy.

We dealt with the underfunding of the college system. Here is another document. It's called A Highly Skilled Workforce: Strengthening Ontario's Economic Advantage, from Colleges Ontario. They say: "However, despite the new investments provided by Reaching Higher"—that historic money that addresses all of the underfunding injustices for a long time; that very funding that still keeps Ontario last, in spite of that very funding—"Ontario colleges continue to operate with less per-student revenue from operating grants and tuition fees than colleges in other provinces."

In spite of your Reaching Higher plan, you Liberals are still proudly number 10 in the country. You should stand up and say that, that your Reaching Higher has put you at the bottom of the heap, and you're proud. You should say that.

Hon. David Caplan: Rosario wants to cut health care.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: David Caplan, you should say it. Get up, you. Get up and defend the minister of post-secondary education and defend the Reaching Higher plan, that \$6 billion that puts you at the very bottom rather than, dare I say it, the middle.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, I want to tell you about you and I want to tell you about your government. I want to tell you, you've been in power for two terms. It's not about me; it's about you. It's about you and your limousine, not about me and my car. It's about accountability of governments, not about accountability of the opposition. Governments run the show; we don't. We merely push you to do good from time to time, as much and as best we can. We pressure you as best we can to do good whenever we can get you to do good. That's about all we can do.

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Here's another quote. I'm doing my best here. Here's another quote from the same document from Colleges Ontario, where they say this is what they need.

"This year, Ontario's colleges require:

"A \$120 million increase in core operating funding"—\$120 million. Write that down, or I can just send you a copy.

"A \$40 million increase in funding for labour market programs and services;

"A new investment of \$6 million for applied R&D and innovation;

"An additional investment of \$90 million for the renewal and maintenance of facilities and instructional equipment."

Jeff, did you get that?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Got them all.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I can send that to you and to the minister. I know how hard he works and he doesn't have time to read all the documents sent to him by the colleges. So I can send him a copy. I can send you a copy.

College students have been going to colleges year after year in greater numbers than ever before and receiving less and less money than ever before. That's the context in which we find ourselves and in which we debate this bill today. So we're happy for those part-time college teachers who now get the right to bargain collectively.

But there is one provision that people are very nervous about. The removal of deemed strike and lockout provisions is a serious problem. The new bill removes the deemed strike and lockout provisions in sections 59(2) and 63(3) of the old bill. I want to read for the record what this means:

"These provisions determined that, when a bargaining unit was on legal strike or lockout, all employees were

deemed to be on strike or locked out and, as a result, no employee would receive any pay or benefits for the duration of the strike or lockout.

“This provision effectively dissuaded any bargaining unit employee from crossing the picket line and prevented the employer from hiring employees from the unit during a lockout.”

OPSEU president Warren Thomas, said: “It is pretty outrageous that this government thinks that recognizing the charter rights of one group of workers means that another group of workers must give something up.”

“In the event of a strike or lockout, removal of the deemed strike provisions means having 180,000 students walking through picket lines, potentially mixed in with scabs. This change will only serve to increase picket-line tensions and picket-line confrontations.”

That is a serious worry for us and for the unions. We believe that was a right contained in the old bill, the Colleges Collective Bargaining Act, and that is being removed today. The question is, why are you doing that? Why give a right and then take another right away? Why couldn't you just let things be? If they work, why change them?

It's typical of Liberals that they always have to mix up the rights, to confuse the public, to divide people of all sorts, to divide the unions. Michael, you understand what I'm talking about. It's about a strategy of division. It's about a strategy by Liberals, not being able to give something without causing greater conflict in society. That's what Liberals do on a regular basis. Why do they do that?

I know you Liberals are happy-go-lucky types. You are so happy to be in the middle; you don't have to do a thing. It is a beautiful political advantage you have, to sit on that fence and not worry about a thing. It's a pretty lovely luxury you have. It's a luxury not to have to take a stand. Speaker, you'll let me know when the time is up. It's a luxury not to take a stand—what a happy luxury that is—versus those of us who take a stand on the left or the right and get beaten up by so many people. Not Liberals; Liberals want to go slow, as not to offend anybody. Liberals want to do little, as not to offend anybody. Liberals want to avoid doing anything for as long as they possibly can, not to offend anybody. God bless.

Speaker, I'll have another opportunity to regain this debate tomorrow morning. Thanks very much.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. This debate stands adjourned.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome a number of guests to the Ontario Legislature today.

On behalf of the member from Don Valley East, in the east members' gallery, from the lung cancer society:

Laurie Bass, Sarah Nass, Betty Jacoby, Ralph Gouda and Mary Jane Reese.

On behalf of the member from Essex, we'd like to acknowledge the 40-plus visitors who are joining us today from the insurance industry and the Insurance Bureau of Canada.

On behalf of page Kelvin Chukwu: his father, Roxton; his mother, Gloria; his sister, Roxanne; and his sister, Janet, are in the public galleries.

On behalf of page Jocelyn Topp: her mother, Alison Topp, and a friend of their family, Karen Allen, in the public gallery.

On behalf of the member from Hamilton Centre: Sally Palmer, the chair; and Anne Newbigging, member of the social action committee of the Ontario Association of Social Workers in Hamilton; and Rosemarie Chapman, a Hamilton resident, are in the west members' gallery.

A special welcome, on behalf of the member from Etobicoke Centre: I'd like to welcome Mr. Robert Bateman, renowned artist and naturalist. He is in the east members' gallery.

To all of our guests: Welcome to Queen's Park today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: My first question is to the Premier. Premier, during the 2003 election, you spoke passionately about the 1,900 deaths in Ontario each year caused by smog-causing pollutants. That's how you justified your promise to close the coal plants by 2007. Of course, we all know that you broke that promise not once, but twice.

This week, the Ontario Medical Association reports that smog-related deaths in Ontario have increased by five times since 2003, to 9,500 a year. At this rate, by 2014 the death rate will rise to over 20,000 per year. Given your passion five years ago, what are you going to do to prevent these thousands of premature deaths?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I certainly welcome the question. I know that there is a strong consensus and shared determination for us to continue to keep working together as hard as we can to improve the quality of our natural environment here in Ontario.

I am proud to confirm once again that, to the best of my knowledge, we are the only jurisdiction on the face on this planet which is actually phasing out its coal-fired generation. That is a serious undertaking. We've already reduced our coal-fired generation by one third. We have legislated the remaining phases of that entire reduction. It's something that we are proud of; it's something that we will continue to pursue on behalf of Ontarians. There is more that we can do beyond that, and I'll be delighted to speak to those other options momentarily.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I didn't witness the passion that the Premier expressed in 2003. I asked him

specifically about the next six years and the thousands of people who are going to die in that period of time. Your inaction means that there are now more smog days per year in Ontario than in the entire eight years before the 2003 election. You made irresponsible promises you knew you couldn't keep. That's what's so appalling: The Premier sat back and did nothing to mitigate the consequences of his broken promises. Premier, are you prepared to accept responsibility for these thousands of smog-related deaths caused by your lack of a backup plan?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Just to expand a bit further on the beneficial impact of phasing out coal-fired generation: We'll have reduced coal generation by two thirds by 2011; that now has the force of law. This will be the single largest reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Canada. It's equivalent to taking seven million cars off the road.

Just by way of contrast, in China they're putting out a new coal plant every seven to 10 days. We're going in the other direction.

In addition to that, we are making billions of dollars of new investment in public transit to give Ontarians an alternative, to take advantage of new transit that is affordable, that is convenient and that serves as an attractive alternative to using the comfort and convenience of their own car.

Those are two new approaches, by the way, which were both shunned by the previous Conservative government.

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Mr. Robert W. Runciman: The Premier, when he was the Leader of the Opposition, laid at the doorstep thousands of deaths in Ontario because, he said, we weren't closing coal plants fast enough. We're the only party that actually did close a coal plant.

It boggles the mind to hear this Premier say they're working on reducing coal emissions when they recently paid millions of dollars to Dofasco to get them to switch from natural gas to coal.

The reality is that this government can't afford to shut down coal plants by 2014. That's because once again they dithered, and by 2014 there won't be an affordable, sustainable supply of energy to replace what the coal plants currently supply.

Premier, Ontarians can't wait until 2014 to see if maybe smog deaths start to decline. What are you going to do today to put a stop to what is really a dramatic increase in deaths due to smog?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Well, in an ideal world, we'd be able to shut down the coal-fired plants yesterday, but we can't. It's taking some time, but we're making some real progress.

Let me tell you a little bit about our plan to double the use of renewable energy. We used to have 10 wind turbines in the province of Ontario. Now there are over 700 that are either under construction or completed. The largest solar farm in North America is going to be built outside of Sarnia. We're expanding capacity at Niagara

Falls; we're going to generate enough new power there to power 160,000 more Ontario homes. We're building new nuclear generation because, notwithstanding that there are some challenges associated with that and we want to be mindful of those, they don't produce greenhouse gases. We are bringing online new, clean, renewable energy. We've got a dramatic plan to drive conservation in Ontario, and we're investing heavily in new public transit.

If you put that all together, I think Ontarians will conclude it is a modern, progressive approach.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I guess those thousands of deaths were only a passionate concern during the election campaign.

A second question to the Premier: On June 15 last year, the Toronto Star reported that in preparation for the upcoming provincial election, the Liberal-friendly Working Families group was being reformed, and a final decision would be made the following week. What do you know? The following week, two key players in Working Families met with your Minister of Finance in his office in the Frost Building, but no minutes were kept.

Premier, this is a serious issue where election finance laws may have been breached. Would you commit to securing information on details of that secret meeting and tabling them in this House?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I am proud to say that we have an open, continuing dialogue with every so-called group in the province of Ontario. Whether that's labour groups, whether it's heads of banks, whether it's charitable organizations, whether it's business organizations, chambers of commerce, doctors, nurses, teachers and the like, we are proud to say that we are an open government, that we have an ongoing dialogue with all Ontarians. We don't pick and choose as other governments have before. We don't divide and pit one group of Ontarians against the other as other governments have before. We believe in working with all Ontarians, and we're proud of that record.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: It's another question the Premier wants to avoid, obviously. I suspect the Premier has to appreciate the seriousness of a third party coordinating its activities with a registered political party. The meeting I referred to took place in the office of the Minister of Finance, not Liberal Party headquarters. One of the unions represented at the meeting with the minister received a \$3.3-million grant the very next week, and that same union went on to donate \$150,000 to Working Families. Premier, this meeting took place on government property in a minister's office. Election laws may have been breached and funding decisions taken inappropriately. I ask you once again to reveal the details of that meeting in a government office and the decisions that flowed from it.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I can say, for example, that I've personally met with heads of nursing organizations.

They've asked me to hire thousands more nurses, and I wouldn't be surprised if some of them took credit for that. I've met with environmentalists who asked us to save the greenbelt. We've done that, and I wouldn't be surprised if some environmentalists took credit for that. I've met with business organizations. They've asked me to reduce capital taxes. We've done that. I wouldn't be surprised if some of them took credit for that. It's not a surprise that we meet with a number of groups on an ongoing basis. They ask us to do certain things. If we believe that those things serve the greater public interest, then we're only too proud and too pleased to move in that direction.

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: I wish I could say that was informative, but it was anything but. I'll go back over this again. The individuals who attended that meeting with the Minister of Finance in his office were Pat Dillon, a principal of Working Families, and Mike Gallagher from Local 793 of the operating engineers, who donated \$150,000 to Working Families, a Liberal-friendly organization—again, a meeting with no notes, memos or minutes. Subsequently, a week later the operating engineers had received \$3.3 million—\$5 million in grants over the next six months. These are very serious issues, Premier, and questions that arise out of this. I ask the Premier to release copies of Local 793's grant applications and provide details of the June 18 meeting. Will you do that?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The leader of the official opposition says that we shouldn't have given that money to this particular organization when he himself provided, on behalf of his government of the day, that same organization with two million public dollars. At the time, he seemed to be very proud of that. He said, "Developing a skilled workforce is key to a strong economic future. Upgrading skills of employees in the heavy equipment industry is vital for the sector. Skilled workers strengthen the competitiveness of business and industry in Ontario, improve productivity, create jobs and contribute to the growth of our economy." Bob Runciman said that when he provided that organization with \$2 million. He was right then and he's wrong today.

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Howard Hampton: A question to the Premier: Over the past few weeks we've witnessed how the McGuinty government handed out a cheque to General Motors for \$235 million without getting any product or job guarantees, and the result is that 2,600 autoworkers at the Oshawa truck plant are losing their jobs. Then we saw how 100 of the very engineers at the Oshawa GM engineering centre are being laid off as well. Now there are reports that the demand for the new Camaro model to be built at the Oshawa car plant could be less than 40,000 units, only a third of what was originally predicted. My question to the Premier is this: Can the Premier assure us that there won't be layoffs at the GM car plant after layoffs at the GM truck plant have already happened?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I welcome the question. I'm sure the leader of the NDP is prepared to recognize that we have a very competitive North American auto sector environment. We have come to the table, we have rolled up our sleeves and we have scored, I think, some major victories. The distinct impression that the leader of the NDP leaves with us on a daily basis is that we should do nothing; we should not strive to compete, we should not strive to enjoy any kinds of successes on behalf of our auto workers. If we hadn't come to the table, I am confident that we would not have landed, for example, a new Toyota plant. There are 2,000 jobs associated with that Toyota plant. Is the leader of the NDP saying that we should not have proceeded with that kind of partnership? Every single day he seems to be saying that we should allow the car industry to unfold as it might otherwise do and not roll up our sleeves and not make real and genuine efforts on behalf of Ontario families, especially on behalf of autoworkers. I reject that approach. We will continue to find ways—

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

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Mr. Howard Hampton: The Premier seems to be saying two things. He seems to be saying it's okay for the McGuinty government to give General Motors \$235 million and for General Motors to lay off thousands of workers. And he seems to be saying that laid-off General Motors workers from Windsor and Oshawa should move to Woodstock. He seems to be saying that's the answer. My point is this: If the McGuinty government is going to hand out hundreds of millions of dollars to GM and other companies, the McGuinty government should get job or production guarantees, something the McGuinty government has consistently failed to do.

But I want to ask now about Chrysler's Bramalea plant. The McGuinty government handed out a cheque for \$77 million to Chrysler. Some of that money was supposed to ensure a new model at Chrysler's Bramalea plant. The so-called new model is the Dodge Challenger, a muscle car which is not selling well at all—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think it's probably helpful to hear from the one individual charged here in Canada with representing the interests of the auto workers, and that's Buzz Hargrove. Let's hear what he has to say on this score, because I think it's helpful. He says, "Ontario's auto policy ... leveraged over \$7 billion in badly-needed auto investments. Every automaker in the province received support for major projects, that helped make Ontario the leading automotive jurisdiction in North America." He goes on to say, "Does anyone possibly believe the Ontario government could force GM, through a one-time \$235-million investment, to keep spending \$20 billion per year making vehicles that it cannot sell? Get real."

I would say the same thing to my friend opposite. I'm with Buzz Hargrove; I'm with the CAW. I'm for con-

tinuing to find ways to work together and to strengthen the auto sector in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Howard Hampton: The Premier conveniently skips over the reality. Yes, some of the engineering and development was done at Oshawa, but the new investment and the jobs are moving to Mexico. The Premier seems to think that's okay. I want to tell him, for the workers at Oshawa, that's not okay.

But the Premier missed the second part of the question. Chrysler's Bramalea plant also has a problem. Their new model, the Challenger, is a muscle car that's not selling well at all. So I'm given to ask, did the Premier get any job guarantees there or are we going to see the same thing: layoffs at Chrysler's Bramalea plant? Chrysler gets the money; workers get the layoff. Can the Premier give us any assurance that we won't see more layoffs there?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The assurance that I will give auto workers and the auto sector generally is that we will continue to work as hard as we can. I'd love to live in a world where you could lock everything down and we wouldn't lose a single auto sector job here in the province of Ontario, but that's not something that we can guarantee. It's certainly not something that US governments have been able to guarantee, and more recently, even Mexico has not been able to provide that guarantee, as we saw a plant close there.

Again, I want to make reference to Mr. Hargrove and something that he had recently published, when he said that the "attacks of ... Hampton on Ontario's auto strategy are anything but informed. They are an attempt to make cheap political points, at the expense of the tens of thousands of hard-working auto workers in Ontario who quite rightly fear for their future. Myself and my members are deeply offended."

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Premier. If the Premier thinks losing thousands of jobs in Windsor and thousands of jobs in Oshawa is a "cheap political point," then I invite the Premier to come to the Windsor demonstration tomorrow at noon. I'll be there talking with the workers.

But I want to ask this question of the Premier. About four weeks ago, we met with the auto manufacturers of Ontario. One of the points they made to us, something that is within provincial control, is the escalating cost of industrial hydroelectricity for manufacturers in Ontario. Yet the McGuinty government is set to announce huge, big nuclear plants. Can the Premier assure us that these nuclear plants will come in as budgeted and not cost manufacturers even more on their hydro bills?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I know that the Minister of Energy is going to want to speak to this shortly, but let me just say this: We have decided, as a government—and I know that Ontarians want us to move in this direction—understanding that about 50% of our electricity now comes from nuclear generation, we're going to have to

modernize our existing fleet: renew some of those and build new generation. It's not a decision that we've taken lightly, and there are real costs associated with this; there are significant costs associated with this. I'd like to be able to say that we can nail down all those costs today, but not even the leader of the NDP knows what the price of oil is going to be 10 or 15 years from now, or the price of steel or the price of labour. We'll do everything we can to contain those costs, but we must move forward with the construction of new nuclear generation in Ontario, and we will not shrink from that task.

Mr. Howard Hampton: I didn't hear an answer to the question. What I do know is this: The history of nuclear power in Ontario is a very expensive history. No nuclear plant has been built in Ontario that has come in on budget. They've all been over budget—billions of dollars over budget. Darlington was supposed to cost under \$4 billion; it ended up costing almost \$15 billion. The latest nuclear plant being built in Finland by Areva is now two years late and \$2 billion over budget.

I ask again: Can the Premier give manufacturers in Ontario any assurance that his backroom decision to move even greater into nuclear power will not cost manufacturers huge hydro bills in the future?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: For the public's information and maybe the leader of the third party, just to set the record straight on industrial prices: Since 2003, the all-in industrial price in the province over those four years has gone up well less than inflation. We, the government, are very conscious of the need for an affordable electricity plan in the future.

I would also say—you use terms like "secret" and whatnot. We've published our plan. It is a 20-year plan. It's out there for the public and, in fact, is now before the Ontario Energy Board. There is nothing secret about it; it's extremely public. It starts with conservation, and that's where we put our focus. We are going to: reduce our use through conservation by roughly 20%; double renewable energy; and maintain our nuclear fleet.

I'd just say to the member: Be cautious with the language you use. There's nothing secret about this. It is a public—

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: What is appalling about this argument is that this is a government that, in the backroom, changed the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act so that your nuclear scheme would not have to undergo a full-fledged environmental assessment. This is a government, if you look only a year ago, that had a backroom slush fund just before the election. This is a government that has handed out \$235 million to General Motors and got no jobs guarantee. Now this decision is going to be made in the backroom as well. I ask: Can you give the manufacturers—the forest sector, the auto sector, the steel sector—any assurance that this is not going to drive hydro rates even higher and kill more jobs in Ontario?

Hon. Gerry Phillips: You throw mud indiscriminately. I'd just say to the member: Be a little cautious and try to deal a little bit with the facts. This has been a public process. We released a request for proposals publicly. It is out there on the website. We invited applicants to come forward. We have evaluated them. We will be issuing another request for proposals—all public. The contract that we will sign with the winning proposal will be public. You can indiscriminately try to throw mud, but you should try to deal with the facts periodically as well.

I would say to the public: What we're determined to do is to ensure that, going forward, we have an electricity plan that is reliable, affordable and done in the most environmentally sensitive way. It's public for all the public to look at. I would tend to discount a fair bit this language that does not bear a relationship to what's actually taking place.

1110

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Premier. I want to bring a matter to the Premier's attention that I'm sure he'll be very concerned about as well. On March 4, a 6-year-old grade 1 student was assaulted in the washroom of a York region Catholic school by two 13-year-old students. Although the principal was made aware of the assault, she did not report it to the parents. The parents found out about this from the boy's sister, who attends the same school. The 6-year-old had been beaten with a belt. When the parents confronted the principal and asked if she would contact the police, the principal said no, and that she had no intention of reporting the matter. The parents called the police, who charged the two 13-year-old boys with assault and assault with a weapon. To this day, the parents have yet to receive a formal acknowledgment from the school board or the principal of a failure to act responsibly.

I want to know from the Premier, will he agree to intervene to ensure that the school board takes—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's the first time that I've been apprised of these facts. They are, to say the very least, disturbing. I will certainly undertake to bring this to the attention of the Minister of Education so that she can move on this as quickly as possible and learn more about it herself and then take the appropriate steps. Obviously, our thoughts are with the parents of the child involved, and I think we have a very high accountability to them to keep them informed and to ensure that these kinds of things are, in fact, reported at the earliest possible opportunity.

Mr. Frank Klees: I have been working with the parents over the last number of months in the wake of this incident. I wrote a letter to the director of education. Her response to me showed that the director of education was misinformed about this incident. In response to that

letter, the mother said this: "The letter shows nothing but the board having any desire for reaching a satisfactory resolution to this matter in the near future, but only reinforces the efforts made by the school and board to downplay and conceal the assault and the mishandling of it under their direction."

What we don't want to have happen here is that parents lose faith in the safety of the schools their children are attending. I welcome the Premier's willingness to direct the minister to look into this matter personally. We all want to be assured that parents have the confidence that their children will be safe in their schools and that principals will deal properly, as well as teachers—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I can't speak to the facts because I'm not familiar with them myself. I will have the minister look into this as soon as possible. I think that's the responsible thing to do in the circumstances. But let me just second the sentiment expressed by my colleague opposite. If there's one thing that I think we are legitimately entitled to expect of our publicly funded school system, it's that our children will, at a minimum, be safe there. Notwithstanding quality-of-education issues and challenges associated with learning, at a minimum, we expect that our children will be safe in the schoolyard and within the school building itself. That's a legitimate expectation. I fully endorse the sentiment expressed by my colleague. As I say, I will ask the minister to look into these facts and report.

SEVERANCE PAYMENTS

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Here we go again. Premier Wire in Alexandria, Ontario, is shutting down permanently later this month. More workers will be out of work. Many of them put decades into this company. To add insult to injury, the company is playing hardball and refusing to sit down with the workers and discuss fair severance. My Bill 6, which I brought before this House before Christmas, would have dealt with these types of situations, when thousands of people in this province are losing their severances. That government shot it down, wouldn't even read it, wouldn't even look at it and wouldn't even discuss it. When will this minister agree that Ontario's labour laws need to be overhauled to protect workers all over this province?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I thank the member for the question. Let me begin by saying that Ontario is the only province in the country—and the member should know this—that has statutory protection for severance pay. That's important. So we are there and we are protecting workers across this province.

Where the member is correct is that there are issues that have to be dealt with, with regard to the protection of severance pay, but they need to be dealt with in Ottawa. We've made sure that we've been in touch with the

Minister of Labour federally; in fact, we have the support of a number of provincial Ministers of Labour, as we seek leadership in Ottawa to amend the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and provide a greater level of priority to severance and termination pay.

We have taken leadership on this issue. We're being joined by other provinces across the country, and we're determined to continue to work with Ottawa to encourage them to change that act.

Mr. Paul Miller: Pass the buck again; blame somebody else.

Minister, our labour laws do nothing for the workers of Premier Wire because a layoff of this size does not qualify under your existing legislation. But it doesn't feel like a small-scale layoff to the workers, their families and the tight-knit community that has been struck hard by this. This is yet another example of why we need better protection for workers facing layoffs, regardless of how many, or how large or how small their workplace might be. Why doesn't this minister move on this? Stop blaming other governments. You have the power to change it.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Once again, let me be clear. Ontario is the only province in the country that has statutory protection for severance pay for workers. That's important.

Unfortunately, what the member didn't say in his question is how he wanted to fund his program. What he wanted to do is tax workers and businesses across this province with a payroll tax. Is that what we want to do during this time?

We have taken away the taxes for manufacturers with regard to the capital tax. We've contributed to helping grow this economy through those initiatives. The NDP say they care about workers, yet they want to tax manufacturers to pay for that program. That is not the way to go. We will not contemplate doing that. We're here to help manufacturers. We're here to help workers keep those jobs, not to take them away, and that's what the NDP policy would do.

SKILLS TRAINING

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a question for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Last week, the minister and the Premier launched Ontario's \$355-million second-career strategy, which will provide long-term retraining to recently laid-off unemployed individuals. This is going to help a lot of laid-off workers get long-term training and high-value jobs.

The second-career program covers people who have been laid off since June 2007. My question for the minister is, what are we going to do about all the people who lost their jobs before June 2007?

Hon. John Milloy: I welcome the question from my colleague. It gives me a chance to correct the record. Unfortunately, I think the opposition have sown a bit of confusion here in the Legislature about supports that are available to all Ontarians anywhere in this province who find themselves without a job.

On January 1, 2007, the suite of federal training programs was transferred to the province, and together we put forward a network of over 1,200 agencies throughout Ontario that form the Employment Ontario network. Through this network, they provide support to any Ontarian who's looking for a job. Not every Ontarian needs retraining. Oftentimes, it's about help with job search techniques, information about the local labour market, and resumé writing. We also offer them literacy and skills upgrading. For those workers who are eligible for employment insurance, we offer access, through the Ontario skills development program, to training opportunities.

Mr. Bob Delaney: The minister mentioned the Ontario skills development program, which is part of Ontario's \$1-billion Employment Ontario program. However, the leader of the third party alleged yesterday that people who have run out of their EI cannot apply for this training.

Would the minister please clarify whether workers who have lost their jobs and exhausted their employment insurance benefits can access retraining through the Ontario skills development program?

Hon. John Milloy: Once again, it's a wonderful opportunity to clarify the record for everyone. Since the transfer of federal programs on January 1, 2007, some 37,000 Ontarians have participated in training programs through the Ontario skills development program. As it is a federal program, it's open to those individuals who are currently receiving employment insurance or who received regular employment insurance benefits up to three years ago. In fact, records indicate that 15% of individuals who have participated in this program had seen their employment insurance benefits run out. So I think I want to correct the record of what was said yesterday to say that on top of the other suites of services that are offered by Employment Ontario, we offer the skills training opportunity for workers who have been on employment insurance. As has been discussed, for recently laid-off—

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

1120

AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. The Liberal government's method of shovelling money out the door with abandon is catching up with them.

The auto sector is in real crisis, and they need a responsible partner in government. They need a partner that can help the whole industry, that protects workers and that encourages innovation with a competitive tax structure. That might mean that the cricket clubs won't get \$1-million handouts anymore, and that's too bad. Instead, it means that corporate subsidies will come with conditions. They'll come based on good research and careful planning, not on the whim of the Premier and his minister.

Minister, recent events have clearly revealed that your auto sector investment strategy is simply not working. Ontarians are concerned that \$650 million of their hard-earned tax dollars have vanished into thin air, yet all you can do is sing your own praises. If you are so confident in your program, will you commit today to calling on the Auditor General to perform a special value-for-money audit—

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

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I find it very interesting that one member of the Conservative caucus says one thing but another says something else. I would just like them to come together as a caucus, perhaps involve their leader, and decide what position today they're going to take on support for the automotive sector.

The member from Oshawa says one thing; the member nearby in Ajax–Whitby says another. “I wouldn't dismiss (another provincial investment) out of hand, especially where I come from. General Motors is the primary employer.” That's Christine Elliott, last month, 2008. “I think it's important that they be given whatever support that they can give.” Again that's Christine Elliott.

Please pick a side. Are you on the side of GM, are you on the side of workers, or are you just an irrelevant party with an irrelevant position?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The fact is, we can't believe what this minister says anymore. You can be as loud as you want, give us mean looks and point your finger everywhere you want, but that won't change the fact that this Liberal government's deals with GM and other manufacturers are very suspect. It won't change the fact that on your watch, thousands of auto workers have been left out in the cold. You've been secretive about this for months, and your figures regarding contracts and job guarantees are in constant flux.

Whether you're in front of the media, at committee or answering questions in this House, you continuously demonstrate that you do not fully grasp the complex details of your portfolio. All you can do is stand there with anger in your eyes and decry the opposition for opposing you.

Minister, you're clearly in over your head. It is time to seek guidance. Will you call for a special audit of your automotive investment strategy today and give Ontarians the satisfaction they deserve?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I guess it does continue, because the leader in the House for the Conservative Party said that “getting involved in the investment side of new technology and innovation I think is an appropriate role for government.” Bob Runciman, June 5. That was just the other day.

So let me say again: Which half of the caucus are you on? Are you on the half that is opposed to the auto sector? Are you on the half that is supporting the automotive sector? I would like to say to this member in particular: We have had investment programs that are working, and in fact they're working in this member's own backyard. I would encourage this member to look in

his own backyard for real jobs that have come to Halton as a result of the programs of this Ontario government. I will be sending your voting record to the very people you purport to support.

ABORIGINAL RIGHTS

Mr. Howard Hampton: To the Premier: Today, as the Premier watches the Prime Minister apologize to First Nations, will the Premier apologize for the McGuinty government's failure to properly consult and accommodate First Nations before allowing mining exploration companies to stake mining claims on First Nations' traditional lands? And will the Premier apologize to First Nation leaders from Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug First Nation and Ardoch First Nation when those leaders were jailed because of the McGuinty government's failure to properly consult and accommodate First Nations?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm disappointed. I don't think I've ever said that before, but I just can't think of a better expression. There's something really important that's going to take place this afternoon in the House of Commons in Ottawa. The Prime Minister and I are on different sides on many issues, but on this side I'm squarely in his camp, because I think it's the Canadian camp.

He's going to offer a very important apology on behalf of the people of Canada for a painful period in our history which we must acknowledge and come to grips with. This apology, I hope, will serve as part of an ongoing effort to reconcile ourselves to our past, to our present, and to lay the foundation for a stronger future, especially for our aboriginal community. So I just don't know why the leader of the NDP would want to —

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: I believe every member of this Legislature supports what the Prime Minister of Canada is doing today. But it seems to me, given the recent history of Ontario, that this Premier has something to apologize for. The fact of the matter is that innocent First Nation leaders were jailed in Ontario under the McGuinty government. Why? Because they stood up for their treaty, their constitutional and their aboriginal rights.

They said, “We want the McGuinty government to observe the constitutional law of Canada,” which requires the McGuinty government to properly consult and accommodate First Nations before you allow mining claims to be staked in their territory. They asked that the McGuinty government use section 35 of the Mining Act to exempt their traditional lands from mining staking. I agree, I support the Prime Minister, but will the Premier apologize for —

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There is undoubtedly more work to be done here in Ontario. I look forward to

building on the foundation of reconciliation that will be further strengthened by the Prime Minister this afternoon.

But I'd like to think we have moved somewhat here in Ontario. I think, in comparison to the previous decades, we've moved at a rather fast pace. We've got a new ministry; we have a minister. We have a budget devoted to aboriginal issues. We've resolved the Ipperwash matter. We have a new gaming revenue sharing agreement. We have a new partnership fund that we put in place. I think those are significant milestones that we have just put in place ourselves.

Again, today, I would like Ontarians and Canadians to understand the significance of the event that will take place this afternoon, the importance to all of us to establish that spirit of—

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

ONTARIO ARTISTS

Ms. Leanna Pendergast: My question is for the Minister of Culture. This past weekend, I was pleased to join the Minister of Culture in Kitchener to launch the Spotlight festival, Ontario's first Celebrate Our Artists weekend. Many constituents in my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga were treated to a weekend filled with free events, including literature, movies, theatre, dance and performing arts. We also enjoyed unique behind-the-scenes workshops, lectures and artists' talks. It created a vibrant atmospheres that's truly reflective of our province and our people.

Our culture defines us. Can the Minister of Culture please explain what action the government has taken to acknowledge the importance of Ontario's artists?

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: Ontario's artists not only enrich our lives, they also give expression to who we are, where we come from and where we want to go. The McGuinty government is pleased to support our artists, because we recognize that they contribute to our economic prosperity and to our social vitality. That is why we formally recognize the valuable contributions that artists make to our province.

As part of this recognition, we committed to celebrating the importance of Ontario's artists in communities right across this beautiful province. That is why we proclaimed the first weekend in June as Celebrate Our Artists weekend, a time when we shine the spotlight on their valuable contributions.

1130

Ms. Leanna Pendergast: I'm pleased to hear that the government recognizes the valuable contributions our artists make. I can tell you that in my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga, artists and arts organizations have created a vibrant community for residents and families to enjoy. Indeed, Ontario is fortunate to be the home of many talented artists, not just in my riding but in communities throughout the province.

Can the Minister of Culture please elaborate on what else the government has done to celebrate our artists in communities across Ontario?

Hon. M. Aileen Carroll: My colleague from Kitchener and I had a wonderful time together, and my colleague behind me as well.

Kitchener wasn't the only community where we celebrated our artists this weekend. We also held festivals in Waterloo, Stratford, Guelph, Cambridge and surrounding areas. These festivals shone the spotlight on 250 artists, and more than 100 free activities were held by these artists and art organizations. Many of the activities provided local residents with a chance to explore the arts first-hand and get involved in community participation.

Through these Celebrate Our Artists festivals, we hope Ontarians will gain a broader appreciation for the arts and for the artists themselves. I use as an example one of Ontario's most pre-eminent and highly regarded artists, Robert Bateman, who has joined us here in the west gallery this morning.

TOURISM

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question today is for the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship. The tourism industry has been warning this government for weeks that it needs immediate action from this government. In fact, for five years now, resorts in Ontario have seen a steady decline in vacancy rates.

On Tuesday, the North Bay city council called on your government, the McGuinty government, to consider the PC Party's summer tax relief plan to cut PST on hotels and attractions this summer so they can support their struggling tourism industry. What is your answer to the North Bay city council? Will you help them out this summer? Will you, Mr. Minister, support our summer tax relief plan?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: To the Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I thank the member for the question. One thing I could tell the member is that this government is committed to a sustainable, vital and viable tourism sector. That's why we are not moving on poor Band-Aid measures like the Tory party has come up with.

What we are doing is working with all our partners in tourism and making sure that we have a comprehensive strategy. Part of that strategy was a \$30-million investment last fall in the tourism sector, making sure that we can help all our partners, especially for this summer season. Our campaign, "There's no place like this," has been hugely successful. The numbers are coming. The member should applaud that campaign, that marketing initiative.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I would have at least thought that the Minister of Small Business would have actually cared about small businesses in this House when they're suffering so badly. Anybody who would call our plan a piecemeal effort I don't think understands the job of being the Minister of Tourism.

As gas prices continue to soar, the US economy stumbles and job losses are announced almost every day,

people cannot afford to take their families on summer vacations this year. Hotel and resort owners need immediate relief, not another study. They don't need a government that's going to wait a year and tell them what they already know, that tourism is already in trouble. Many jobs are at stake. Tourism could use billions of dollars this summer.

Our party has put forward a practical plan, a summer tax relief plan that will give hotel and resort owners like those in North Bay a helping hand. Why won't you consider North Bay's request? Or are you planning on turning your back on another Ontario community?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: The one thing we can agree on is talking about North Bay. I applaud the champion member we have here for North Bay in Monique Smith. North Bay is a four-season destination with a wonderful lake, wonderful attractions, festivals, events, and so many things to do.

Unfortunately, we have a party over there that votes against every tourism measure. They voted against the \$30-million injection that helped tourism. They voted against our budget bill, which put \$92 million into initiatives and tax measures that will help the tourism sector over the next five years. It is very unfortunate that we have an opposition party that looks to knock our tourism sector, knock our partners and talk poorly about—

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

STUDENT ASSISTANCE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services, and it's about a promise that she made exactly one year ago to members of the social action committee of the Ontario Association of Social Workers, Hamilton and district branch. When is this minister going to ensure that post-secondary students from families that are low-income and receiving social assistance and who live at home and work part-time don't have their earnings clawed back?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I thank the member opposite for her question. Let me just clarify one thing: It is not a promise I made to fix the problem; the promise I made was to look into solutions. I can tell you that the poverty reduction strategy has as its very foundation that every person in this province has the opportunity to fulfill their potential regardless of the financial circumstances of their family. We are, as you know, travelling the province listening to ideas. This is a very important idea.

I will refer the supplementary to the Minister of Community and Social Services as it does relate to our social assistance rule. But let me assure you that the poverty reduction committee is very committed to improving opportunities for all people in this province.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This minister can refer it to whomever she wants, but it was her promise to the people of Hamilton when she was there consulting before the last election. Her semantics are not going to make a

hill of beans of difference to Rosemary Chapman or the advocates who originally raised this question not too long ago. Rosemary saw her monthly disability support cheque cut significantly because her daughter attends university and makes \$500 a month at a part-time job, which doesn't go very far, as we all know, with the current cost of living and the high tuition fees in this province. Thanks to the NDP's efforts, those secondary school students and youth enrolled in training programs are already exempt from the calculations of family income for ODSP and Ontario Works. When will the McGuinty government add post-secondary students' earnings to the list of exemptions and stop demoralizing these students and their families?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. John Milloy: As my colleague mentioned, we're always looking at ways to reform the OSAP system, but I'd like to point out that under our government we've invested \$1.5 billion in supports for students and made efforts to try to convince students, especially those from circumstances where they wouldn't normally have access to post-secondary education—to ensure they have it.

In terms of social assistance, I'd like to point out that my ministry's Ontario student assistance program works in partnership with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Ontario disability support program and Ontario Works, as well as financial staff at Ontario's post-secondary institutions, to ensure that social assistance recipients enrolled in post-secondary studies receive the funding they need to pursue post-secondary studies. Students with disabilities make—

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

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the Minister of Labour. All of us in this House would agree that the nature of work is changing. Many different types of employment arrangements are now the norm, and the rise in temporary help agencies testifies to that fact. In the past, employment through these agencies was mostly short-term clerical jobs that lasted a few days or weeks. Today, agencies supply workers in a wide range of occupations, and an employee of an agency might be assigned to a single-client business for several months or even years. This raises questions about whether temporary help agency workers are being treated fairly compared to permanent or regular employees.

Would the minister tell us what our government plans to do about the challenges faced by temporary workers in Ontario?

1140

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for her advocacy for vulnerable workers. I know she has worked very hard in her own riding and across this province.

Our government is committed to ensuring that employees working through temporary agencies are properly protected under the law. Issues have been raised by a number of stakeholders, and I've had the opportunity to meet with many stakeholders on this issue. They have raised certain concerns about practices that some temporary agencies are engaging in that may be negatively impacting workers employed in this sector. We want to learn more about these issues. We want to determine if indeed changes are required to the Employment Standards Act—not only are changes required, but what should those changes be? So I've asked my parliamentary assistant, Mr. Vic Dhillon, MPP for Brampton West, to engage in a consultation on this process—

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

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I thank the minister for that information. It's good to know that our government is hearing the concerns being expressed by vulnerable workers in this province and is taking them seriously. Minister, can you please tell this House what our government is currently doing to help temporary agency workers?

Hon. Brad Duguid: As I was referring to in my original answer, we've begun a consultation process. It was launched on May 21. It will continue through until July 7. It is being led by my parliamentary assistant. We're inviting the public to assist us by participating in this important consultation. The information that is brought to our attention we'll take very, very seriously. I encourage the public to go to the Ministry of Labour website, where they can, from the confines of their own homes, consult with us, inform us, help us in our efforts to ensure that we make every effort to improve the protections for these temporary workers. I want to thank Parkdale Community Legal Services, the Workers' Action Centre and many other advocacy groups who have been working very closely with us in these efforts.

CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Recently I met with the Child Development Institute. They told me that research demonstrates the need for special programs to deal with behavioural problems in girls, particularly aggression. The institute has created the only gender-specific, empirically supported program for this vulnerable population. Today, 90 sites around the world use their program, started here in Ontario. Minister, have you been briefed on this program, and are you personally aware of the success of this program in dealing with behavioural problems in girls?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The answer to the question is that I have heard of this. I am actually in the process of researching this issue myself. Some people have given me a book they want me to read, and I've started to read it, about girls and aggression. We are seeing changing patterns of behaviour among girls. So to answer your

question, it's an issue that I think we really do have to look into. I see it as both a women's issue and a children and youth services issue and I look forward to learning more.

Mrs. Julia Munro: The Child Development Institute developed the program through donated dollars. Due to the growing need for research and services, these donations are no longer enough. They asked you last month to provide public funding. Will you commit to providing the money they need for this important program?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm happy to note that we have another "spend" question today. But I don't want to make light of the issue, because it's an important issue. I am a passionate believer in using the evidence, that our programs should be based on good, solid evidence. Of course I cannot commit today to funding the organization, but, as I said earlier, I will commit to looking more into this important initiative.

POVERTY

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. My question is a simple one: When were the invitations to last night's closed-door, by-invitation-only consultation actually sent out?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I find myself very confused by this member. As a bit of background: He followed me to Peterborough; he followed me to Cobourg; he followed me to Ottawa. Last night we invited the member because it was his community, and he came and stayed for an hour. I was delighted he was there, but I would have thought, if he'd really wanted to be part of it, he could have spent the evening.

Having said that, on the one hand he says, "You don't need to consult; just get to work." Now he says, "Consult more." I wish I knew where this member stood on poverty reduction.

Mr. Michael Prue: For the minister's edification, I stayed at the meeting twice as long as the Minister of Health Promotion did.

Last night there were 25 or 30 people in the room; most of them were either ministerial staff or people who work for social agencies. Only one person could make the claim that they were on social assistance. I don't know, because you didn't answer the question on when you sent out the invitations, but when I asked those who were present, they said that the invitations were received last week or on Monday.

My question: How many people in poverty were invited to last night's meeting and when were they informed of the time, the date and the location?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To answer the question: The member has raised an important issue, and that is, how do we get the voices of people living on low income? What we have done is, we always invite members of organizations to bring one of their clients, one of their members, with them. We are hearing from them that there isn't a comfort level doing that. That is why I am going out to youth shelters, to transition houses, to

women's shelters. I am learning first-hand from people who are living in poverty what they want this government to do.

Let me just take a minute and talk about who was there last night: Tropicana Community Services, CARO, Toronto and York Region Labour Council, Scarborough Community Legal Services, ODSP Action Coalition, ACORN, the LHIN, Metro Toronto Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, Family Service Association of Toronto, city of Toronto, United Way, Association of Friendship Centres; the—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you, Minister. The time for question period has ended.

PETITIONS

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to thank the members of the congregation of St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church in Alliston for sending this petition to me.

"Whereas Premier Dalton McGuinty has called on the Ontario Legislature to consider removing the Lord's Prayer from its daily proceedings; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer has been an integral part of our parliamentary heritage that was first established in 1793 under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer is today a significant part of the religious heritage of millions of Ontarians of culturally diverse backgrounds;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to continue its long-standing practice of using the Lord's Prayer as part of its daily proceedings."

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

LUNG CANCER

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'd like to acknowledge Mrs. Laurie Bass, who, along with her daughter, prepared this—with Sarah Nass; mother Betty Jacoby, Mary Jack and former Lung Cancer Ontario president Ralph Gouda, who are sitting in the gallery today. These folks worked tirelessly to coordinate the effort to gather the hundreds, if not thousands, of signatures affixed to this petition, a petition originally submitted to the Honourable David Caplan. Congratulations to all of you.

"Whereas lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in both men and women in Ontario, killing more Canadians than breast, colon and prostate cancer combined; and

"Whereas there are no standardized screening guidelines for early detection of lung cancer and it receives only a fraction of the funding and support committed to other cancers and diseases; and

"Whereas Lung Cancer Canada is committed to raising awareness while providing support and resources to patients, families and health care professionals;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to officially proclaim and hereforth recognize the month of November in Ontario as lung cancer awareness month."

I will submit this petition.

LORD'S PRAYER

Mr. John O'Toole: It's my pleasure to read a petition on behalf of the parishioners of St. John's Anglican Church in Bowmanville. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord's Prayer from its"—rightful—"place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

"Whereas the recitation of the Lord's Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

"Whereas the Lord's Prayer's message of forgiveness and the avoidance of evil is universal to the human condition: It is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena of conflict; and

"Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord's Prayer;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer by the Speaker"—that's you, sir—"in the Legislature."

I am pleased to sign and present this to Ellen, one of the new pages.

PROTECTION FOR MINERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition from the people of Cartier in my riding.

"Whereas current legislation contained in the Ontario health and safety act and regulations for mines and mining plants does not adequately protect the lives of miners, we request revisions to the act;

"Lyle Everett Defoe"—a member of my riding—"and the scoop tram he was operating fell 150 feet down an open stope (July 23, 2007). Lyle was 25 years and 15 days old when he was killed at Xstrata Kidd Creek mine site, Timmins.

"Section R-60 ... states that, 'A shaft, raise or other opening in an underground mine shall be securely fenced, covered or otherwise guarded....' The stope where Lyle was killed was protected by a length of orange plastic snow fence and a rope with a warning sign. These barriers would not have been visible if the bucket of the scoop tram was raised. Lyle's body was recovered from behind the scoop tram.

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

“Concrete berms must be mandatory to protect all open slopes and raises;

“All miners and contractors working underground must have working communication devices and personal locators;

“All equipment involved in injuries and fatalities must be recovered and examined unless such recovery would endanger the lives of others; and

“The entire act must be reviewed and amended to better protect underground workers.”

I fully support this petition and will affix my name to it. I will be sending it with page Brianne.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Joe Dickson: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Central East Local Health Integration Network board of directors has approved the Rouge Valley Health System’s deficit elimination plan, subject to public meetings; and

“Whereas it is important to ensure that the new birthing unit at Centenary hospital, a \$20-million expansion that will see 16 new labour, delivery, recovery and postpartum (LDRP) birthing rooms and an additional 21 postpartum rooms added by October 2008, will not cause any decline in the pediatric services currently provided at the Ajax-Pickering hospital; and

“Whereas, with the significant expansion of the Ajax-Pickering hospital, the largest in its 53-year history, a project that could reach \$100 million, of which 90% is funded by the Ontario government, it is important to continue to have a complete maternity unit at the Ajax hospital; and

“Whereas it is also imperative for the Rouge Valley Health System to balance its budget, eliminate its deficit and debt and realize the benefits of additional Ontario government funding; and

“Whereas the parents of Ajax and Pickering deserve the right to have their children born in their own community, where they have chosen to live and work;

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

“That the Rouge Valley Health System continue to provide the current level of service; and

“That our Ajax-Pickering hospital now serves the fastest-growing communities of west Durham; and

“That the Ajax-Pickering hospital retain its full maternity unit.”

I attach my signature to this, and I will pass that to Jocelyn.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and I continue to receive thousands of names for this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current Liberal government is proposing to eliminate the Lord’s Prayer from its place at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

“Whereas the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer’s message of forgiveness and the avoidance of evil is universal to the human condition: It is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena of conflict; and

“Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord’s Prayer;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the daily recitation of the Lord’s Prayer by the Speaker in the Legislature.”

I support this petition. I sign it and send it down with Charles.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Jeff Leal: I have a petition today to support the Provincial Animal Welfare Act.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act has not been updated since 1919;

“Whereas Bill 50 would require all veterinarians to report suspected abuse and neglect, protecting veterinarians from liability;

“Whereas it would allow the OSPCA to inspect and investigate places where animals are kept;

“Whereas the bill would prohibit the training of animals to fight;

“Whereas Bill 50 would allow the OSPCA to inspect roadside zoos;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 50, entitled the Provincial Animal Welfare Act, 2008, to protect our animal friends.”

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

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Frank Klees: I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly relating to the western Mississauga ambulatory surgery centre. 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 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 have no hesitancy in applying my own signature to this petition.

LORD’S PRAYER

Mr. Bill Mauro: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas an all-party committee is reviewing the recital of the Lord’s Prayer at the beginning of daily proceedings in the Legislature; and

“Whereas the recitation of the Lord’s Prayer has opened the Legislature every day since the 19th century; and

“Whereas the Lord’s Prayer’s message is one of forgiveness, of providing for those in need of their ‘daily bread’ and of preserving us from the evils that we may fall into; it is a valuable guide and lesson for a chamber that is too often an arena for conflict; and

“Whereas recognizing the diversity of the people of Ontario should be an inclusive process, not one which excludes traditions such as the Lord’s Prayer;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to preserve the Lord’s Prayer in the Legislature.”

I agree with this. I will put my signature to it and I will give it to Kelvin.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas crack houses, brothels and other persistent problem properties undermine a neighbourhood by generating public disorder, fear and insecurity; and

“Whereas current solutions—enforcement measures based on current criminal, civil and bylaws—are slow, expensive, cumbersome and not always successful; and

“Whereas safer communities and neighbourhoods (SCAN) legislation is provincial, civil law which counters the negative impact on neighbourhoods of entrenched drug, prostitution or illegal liquor sales based out of homes and businesses and is being successfully utilized in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and the Yukon; and

“Whereas the following have endorsed SCAN legislation: city of Ottawa, city of Kingston, city of Hamilton, federation of Ontario municipalities, Ottawa Police Service, Ottawa Police Services Board, Ottawa Centre

MPP Yasir Naqvi, Ottawa Neighbourhood Watch executive committee, Concerned Citizens for Safer Neighbourhoods, Eastern Ontario Landlord Organization, Friends and Tenants of Ottawa Community Housing, Hintonburg Community Association, Somerset Street Chinatown BIA, Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa and the Dalhousie Community Association;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, urge the province of Ontario to enact safer communities and neighbourhood (SCAN) legislation in Ontario for the benefit of our neighbourhoods and communities.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition. I affix my signature and send it to you by way of page Christopher J.

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

I’d like to thank Leszek Robak of Emerson Lane in Mississauga for having sent these to me. I’m pleased to sign them and to send them down with page Megan.

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: This petition is entitled “Fairness for Ontario workers’ employment insurance.” It is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and reads as follows:

“Whereas the federal government’s employment insurance surplus now stands at \$54 billion; and

“Whereas over 75% of Ontario’s unemployed are not eligible for employment insurance because of Ottawa’s unfair eligibility rules; and

“Whereas an Ontario worker has to work more weeks to qualify and receives fewer weeks of benefits than other Canadian unemployed workers; and

“Whereas the average Ontario unemployed worker gets \$4,000 less in EI benefits than unemployed workers in other provinces and thus not qualifying for many retraining programs;

“We, the undersigned, therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to press the federal government to reform the employment insurance program and

to end the discrimination and unfairness towards Ontario's unemployed workers."

Since I agree with this petition 100%, I'm delighted to send it to you.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The time for petitions has expired. This House stands recessed until 3 o'clock this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1202 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FROST CENTRE INSTITUTE

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon and recognize the inspiration behind a treasure in Haliburton Highlands, the Frost Centre Institute. When the Liberal government and Dalton McGuinty quietly closed the doors to the Frost centre in 2004, a tireless and unwavering effort came forward by thousands of people who understood how important this historic facility is to our community.

Mr. Alan Aubry, along with his wife, Wendy, came out of retirement by making a personal, financial and emotional commitment to reopen the centre as the Frost Centre Institute in the spring of 2007. Last June, I was thrilled to join Al and Wendy Aubry and a number of other representatives to celebrate the reopening of the centre and to celebrate its tradition of excellence in environmental education.

Since that time, what we have seen in Haliburton Highlands, along Lake St. Nora, is the Frost Centre Institute, under Mr. Aubry's leadership, grow into a captivating environmental experience in life and learning. It offers environmental education programs, a summer camp for young people, a water sports program, a visionary arts program, counsellor training programs, and English as a second language.

Just last week, the Frost Centre Institute was one of the many impressive stops that welcomed the review committee in support of the bid for the 2010 Ontario Summer Games in Haliburton.

We are lucky to have the Frost Centre Institute as one of many attractions in Haliburton. Thanks to Al and Wendy Aubry's dedication and self-sacrifice, not only is that vision a reality; it is an internationally recognized environmental school, and it is reinvigorated. It is a treasure in Ontario, and the Frost Centre Institute truly does have a great future.

GARY OSTLER

Mr. Jim Brownell: Occasionally, a community is touched by the presence of an extraordinary individual who serves to support and strengthen its citizens. Father Gary Ostler, who passed away on May 29 at the age of 62 years, was such a person.

A priest at St. Columban's parish in Cornwall, Father Gary was a pillar of the community in my riding of

Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry. A man of great faith, he had a passion for scripture and an unmatched ability to bring it to life for his parishioners.

Beyond his parish, he believed that it was the church's responsibility and privilege to serve the community as a whole. For example, just a month before his death, Father Gary led a memorial service for the Battle of the Atlantic merchant marine servicemen.

While his parish and community were half of his life, the other half was the Canadian Armed Forces. Father Gary, having risen to the rank of major, touched the lives of many of our men and women in uniform, having served as a Canadian Armed Forces chaplain. To quote Master Warrant Officer Jim Devine of the Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry Highlanders, "He was the psychologist, the social worker, the psychiatrist, the marriage counsellor." He also said, "I judge all other padres by how I know Gary."

Father Gary also was a true humanitarian. We saw that in the community, and we saw it throughout Ontario and Canada. He embodied the highest qualities of good citizenship. He will be sorely missed by all those whose lives he touched in my community through his great work.

DALTON MCGUINITY AND DAVID MCGUINITY

Mr. Peter Shurman: This is the story of Dalton and David, two brothers from Ottawa who grew up side by side. They were inseparable. They liked the same girls; they liked the same music; they liked the same cars. Ask each of them which is the best party in Canada and they would tell you, "The Liberal Party." Ask each of them which party was best suited to govern Ontario and they would tell you again, "The Liberal Party."

But something strange happened to the brothers McGuinty one fateful day: Dalton came home to lead the Ontario Liberal gang, the Dalton gang, and David stayed behind and joined the federal Liberal gang. The Ontario Liberals insisted theirs was the best way to combat climate change. The federal Liberals disagreed. "No, it's ours," they cried.

It is here that Dalton's and David's paths diverged. Dalton's Ontario Liberal gang pushes for cap and trade, David's gang for a carbon tax. Cap and trade and a carbon tax—completely incompatible, completely juxtaposed. All was not well at the McGuinty dinner table.

Ah, but no cause for despair. Dalton and David still agree on one thing: Ontarians should pay more.

NIAGARA PARKS COMMISSION

Mr. Peter Kormos: The stated mission of the Niagara Parks Commission is to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of the falls and the Niagara River corridor. You folks who don't know about it, it's the jewel in the crown of Ontario, that Niagara Parkway, and the parklands on the west side of the Niagara River.

Well, under the McGuinty government and his hand-picked appointees to the commission, that valuable natural resource is being desecrated. I tell you, that's a crime to generations of Ontarians to come. McGuinty and the Liberals are hell bent on commercializing, privatizing and Disneyfying that valuable natural resource. They may find it cute that their private partners are going to make huge profits on the asphaltting and the paving over of Niagara parkland, but we down in Niagara think otherwise.

The most recent victim, of course, is Miller's Creek Marina, which was privatized last year. Now, the developer, Warren DAC, wants to build a condo complex and shopping sites on Niagara parkland.

The McGuinty government should be protecting this scarce and valuable natural resource. It talks a big game about tourism, but then slams the door in the face of people who want to be stewards of beautiful attractions like Niagara Parks. I call upon this government to immediately rein in its commission.

CONCESSION STREETFEST

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: Concession Street on Hamilton Mountain is home to some wonderful shops and restaurants. It is also home to one of my favourite events.

This past Saturday, I joined over 20,000 other Hamiltonians on the mountain to help celebrate the 15th annual Concession Streetfest. Even the sweltering heat on Saturday couldn't stop everyone from having a wonderful afternoon. There was definitely something for everyone, from Peruvian flutists, face painting and a petting zoo, not to mention the local business owners showcasing their merchandise for all to see.

My community spirit and pride was in full force on Saturday, and their hard work definitely paid off: Concession Streetfest was a huge success. I'd like to personally thank the Concession Street BIA for their hard work and passion in making our BIA one of the best. I would like to thank Debbie Johnson, Betty Toplack, Paul Wharton, Doris Sanchez, Lorne Lozinski and John Woolcott, not to mention the many volunteers who helped make this year's streetfest such a success.

CLEAN WATER ACT

Mr. Randy Hillier: Although this government hides under a green blanket, their real agenda is clear: a total disregard for democracy and property rights.

We all know that if you're a union, a carmaker, a cricket club or a left-wing environmental group, the Liberal trough flows steady. Everybody else is on the firing line.

Earlier this year, source water committees included compensation for landowners victimized by the Clean Water Act. But in a memo dated May 14, the MOE said no to compensation. This exposes the true Liberal environment: a maze led by Toronto bureaucrats who don't give a damn about rural residents.

While the McGuinty greenbelt launders \$600,000 to Environmental Defence, \$200,000 to Ontario Nature, and \$32,000 for the world's largest multicultural salad, they take rural landowners to the cleaners. It is unjust to ask the little guy to bear the cost imposed by society at large.

Clearly, the minister fears that being honest and forthright will damage his status in cabinet. But he must do the right thing, not the easy thing, and compensate those harmed by the Clean Water Act.

EVENTS IN AJAX-PICKERING

Mr. Joe Dickson: The Pickering and Ajax Rotary Club Ribfest at the Pickering civic centre hosted the largest-ever public event in the history of Pickering or Ajax. Some 30,000 residents enjoyed the ribs, music, hospitality and carnival, which was chaired by Lon Harnish. The profits from this event go back into our two communities, including Ajax Rotary's ongoing contributions to their \$100,000 new Ajax library pledge.

The 38th annual Home Week also kicked off this past weekend, featuring the Home Week parade, the village jazz festival, the DuPont antique car show, Ajax Lions pasta night, and the 100-day bicycle ride from Scrambles restaurant by Dee Miller on behalf of Renewed Strength cancer survivors. Health Promotion Minister Margaret Best and myself were there at 7 a.m. to wish Dee well on her journey.

1510

Sunday is the biggest day of the year, and we'll see over 10,000 visit the Ajax waterfront for the Rotary pancake breakfast between 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. The waterfront festival, under Wilma Graham, will also feature over a dozen venues for people of all ages. This is the largest finale in Durham's history. It will feature choreographed music fireworks valued at \$13,000.

We'd like to thank all of the volunteers; the chair, Peter Hudson; all of the service organizations; Kinsmen, Legion, Lions, Optimist and Rotary; and of course our Ajax mayor and Ajax council.

EVENTS IN WESTON

Mrs. Laura Albanese: This past weekend I had the pleasure of attending the official annual opening of the Weston Farmers' Market. This local tradition signals to all residents of York South-Weston that the summer season is here, and that every weekend they can purchase some good local food and enjoy great entertainment.

It's also a great opportunity for Ontario food producers to showcase and sell locally grown, fresh, high-quality food. This is very significant, because in many cases the foods we eat every day must be transported from thousands of miles away, which has a significant impact on our environment due to transportation emissions. We can all make an effort to enjoy Ontario freshness.

That same morning, less than a block away from the market, I had the opportunity to help unveil a new landmark in the heart of the old village of Weston. A

beautifully crafted clock tower was built in the parkette along the intersection of Lawrence Avenue West and Weston Road. Local councillor Frances Nunziata, the Weston BIA and the local historical society have worked tirelessly for the past three years to bring the project to completion. The clock, designed by architect Michael Presutti, bears an inscription indicating that the village of Weston was established in 1796.

I highlight these events today because I think they are an example of how we can incorporate aspects of traditional lifestyles into our contemporary lives today. We should remember that we can come together and work towards a brighter future without ever forgetting the past.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK

Mrs. Linda Jeffrey: I rise today to talk about a great new initiative that will give Ontario's children and youth real-life lessons in responsible citizenship. The very first Local Government Week will be held later this year from October 19 to 25. The week will connect grade 5 and 10 students to the community through activities such as mock elections and council meetings. For our teachers, this is a new opportunity to bring local civics into the classroom. As an MPP and former councillor, I know how important it is to have an engaged community.

The launch of local government week is the result of hard work and support of many organizations and groups. The Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario are very committed to this initiative. Through their collective efforts, schools and municipalities around the province will receive resource kits with suggestions on activities on how to make Local Government Week meaningful.

We want the youth of Ontario to learn about the importance of local government and realize that they, too, one day can become leaders in their own communities. I urge all members, many of whom have served at the municipal level as I did, to support this initiative in their communities this fall.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT
SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT
(CANADIAN MANUFACTURING
AND ASSEMBLY
OF GOVERNMENT VEHICLES), 2008
LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LE MINISTÈRE
DES SERVICES GOUVERNEMENTAUX
(FABRICATION ET MONTAGE
DE VÉHICULES GOUVERNEMENTAUX
AU CANADA)

Mr. Ouellette moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 92, An Act to amend the Ministry of Government Services Act to regulate the acquisition of government vehicles / Projet de loi 92, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère des Services gouvernementaux afin de réglementer l'acquisition de véhicules gouvernementaux.

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: This is the third in the series of auto sector bills that we've been working on—this one, in particular, for eight months. There's another one yet to come. This bill formalizes the unwritten procurement policy and adds a new dimension of having all government employees, when on provincial or government of Ontario business, who are utilizing a vehicle that is leased or rented go through a procedure which requires that Ontario-made or Canadian-made vehicles be prioritized and used first.

EUGERRY INVESTMENTS LIMITED ACT, 2008

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr11, An Act to revive Eugerry Investments Limited.

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): Pursuant to standing order 85, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

OMBUDSMAN AMENDMENT ACT (CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES), 2008

LOI DE 2008 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'OMBUDSMAN (SOCIÉTÉS D'AIDE À L'ENFANCE)

Ms. Horwath moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 93, An Act to amend the Ombudsman Act with respect to children's aid societies / Projet de loi 93, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'ombudsman en ce qui a trait aux sociétés d'aide à l'enfance.

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.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The bill amends the Ombudsman Act to allow the Ombudsman to investigate any decision or recommendation made or any act done or omitted in the course of the administration of a children's aid society.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 97(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot item 37.

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

Agreed to.

APPOINTMENT OF PROVINCIAL ADVOCATE OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

"To the Lieutenant Governor in Council"—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): You need consent.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Sorry. May I ask for consent, please, to present this?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: "To the Lieutenant Governor in Council:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the appointment of Irwin Elman as the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, as provided in section 3 of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007, to hold office under the terms and conditions of the said act,

"And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Honourable the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker."

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

Agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to congratulate Mr. Elman and I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the selection committee, who worked so hard in the process: Lisa MacLeod, Andrea Horwath, Wayne Arthurs, Nancy Marling from the Legislative Assembly, and as well to say thank you to the outgoing acting child advocate, Agnes Samler. To everyone involved in the process, thank you very much.

1520

Mrs. Julia Munro: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order: I'd just like to ask all members to help me welcome the students from Deer Park school in Keswick and their teacher.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): That was not a point of order. We do welcome the students here. I remind everyone that if they have issues regarding the introduction of members when they're supposed to be

introduced, to take them to their House leader so they can be discussed at the House leaders' meeting or perhaps this summer when the legislative committee meets to review the standing order changes.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 4, 2008, on the motion for the appointment of a Select Committee on Elections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted by the adjournment of the House—I always wanted to use that line but I wanted to use it in a different context, which, thank God, never happened. Somebody caught on to that.

Interjection: That was Dave Warner.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Exactly, David Warner. There's a little story that he had been in this place, then he had gone by way of an election, and then came back. His first speech when he came back was, "As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted"—

Ms. Andrea Horwath: "By an election that I lost."

Mr. Gilles Bisson: "By an election that I lost." I always thought it was a funny line. Anyway, I digress.

We were speaking earlier to the motion of creating a committee that will look at the Election Act for the next provincial election. A number of members have put forward some pretty good suggestions as to some of the things that I think this committee should look to. I want to review them very quickly so that it's fresh in everybody's mind and that we're able to remember what some of the issues are and what it is we need to do.

Number one: enumeration. The list we are using to identify voters in the province of Ontario is abysmal. In most communities, you're lucky if 60% to 70% of that list is accurate. If you live in areas where there are rural routes and people have post office boxes instead of a physical address, it is even worse. It's really only by way of driver's licence information or other information or interaction that the person has with the government that they actually end up on the list.

I know that the electoral officer, John Hollins, says, "Oh yes, we do actual enumerations in some polls where we think we've got problems," but even then it's not done well. I add, as do other members in this assembly, that there were all kinds of problems in the last election, where people wanted to exercise their democratic franchise to vote and actually didn't get a chance because once they went to the voting station, it turned out they weren't on the voters list. Oh yes, they can work that out once they're inside the polling station, they can speak to the DRO and have that fixed up, but most people, because of the lineup, just said, "To heck with it, I'm out of here."

For all the candidates who ran in the last election—myself as the New Democratic incumbent, and the Liberal, Conservative and Green Party members—we had people who showed up to vote who didn't get to vote because they were not on the voters list.

We need proper enumeration, and I think the way you do that is the old standby that worked for many years before we invented computers, and that is, somebody goes to the door and knocks and says, "Who lives here?" It would be such a simple thing to do. Yes, it costs money, yes, it means that we have to spend a little bit more than we do now, but that's the cost of democracy. It's far better to spend money on enumeration than to have people have their right to vote taken away because they're not on the voters list.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Totally disenfranchised.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Totally disenfranchised.

The other issue is the issue of First Nations. I want to point something out to you. October is hunting season in northern Ontario generally, but for First Nations, it is a sustenance, it is the way you get meat for the winter and the fall—by shooting goose, caribou and moose, and fishing, whatever it might be. Communities shut down entirely for a week or two or three, depending on the community, so that people can go back to the land and do the hunting they need to do in order to give them the food they need for the fall and winter months.

Election day, being October 10, falls right in the middle of the hunting season, so what you end up with is entire communities where about half of the people are not there on election day. Guess what? We don't have advance polls in First Nation communities. So if you want to be able to vote and you want to exercise again your democratic franchise, you don't have an advance poll. I guess some people in Toronto would say, "Well, just drive to the next community." Excuse me, but where I come from they can't drive because there are no roads. They're landlocked communities. You've got to get on a plane and fly out. There's 90% unemployment. The ticket from Peawanuck to get to Moosonee, where the advance poll is, is over 1,000 bucks return. If you've got six, seven or 10 people in the family who are of voting age, how can you even afford this? So let's do something really novel. Imagine that, having advance polls in aboriginal communities like Attawapiskat, Fort Albany and Big Trout Lake. Would it be so difficult to make that happen? Why don't we do that?

Last election, I had this fight with our returning officer in the Timmins-James Bay riding, and I brought it to the Chief Electoral Officer, and they were not able to fix it. As a result, the turnout in the last election on the James Bay was less than what we've had in previous elections, because the election fell smack dab in the middle of the aboriginal hunting season. Number two, we did not have advance polls. So we need to be able to have advance polls in those communities so people can vote.

We also need to look at, as far as I'm concerned, another issue that is really troubling, and that is where the polling stations are going to be. We had polling stations that were not accessible to people with handicaps.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Disabilities.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Disabilities. Thank you very much.

I happened to hurt my knee badly playing hockey and I have to use a cane over the next couple of weeks to try to get that back, but there were people who couldn't access their polling station because it wasn't accessible. That is totally unacceptable in a society like Ontario today, in the last election in 2007, and certainly shouldn't be acceptable in the next election. We need to ensure that those polling stations are accessible to all citizens who wish to vote. So we need to have polling stations that are not only accessible but that can be found, which is my next point.

Some of the polling stations that we had were moved from where they had been in previous elections. For example, in the municipality of Hearst, everybody knows that on election day—federal election, municipal election, provincial election—we all go to the same place, les Chevaliers de Colomb, the Knights of Columbus hall, and all the polling stations are there. In the wisdom of those who organized the election the last time around, they moved the polling stations out of there and went and put them in local schools. This created a really interesting situation. Most people don't know that the polling station has been changed, so they walked or they took their cars and drove to the polling station that they had been used to voting in for many years. It wasn't there. So some of them actually didn't go and vote because they said, "To heck with it. I can't be bothered. This is a pain." Some who managed to find out where the polling station was, at the school, showed up there about 8:30 in the morning or whatever time it was to show up and do the vote. When they got there, the buses were all lining up to drop the kids off, the parents were coming in to drop their kids off or pick them up at the end of the school day. It created a confusion of traffic in front of the school like you haven't seen before.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Dangerous for the kids.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's my point. My colleague the member from Hamilton Centre says, "Dangerous for the kids." Right on.

You had all of this traffic coming through, in and out of the school area, in order to have people go and vote. You had buses. You had kids running around. Something could have happened. I'm not saying that we should never use schools, because actually there are some schools that lend themselves to being good polling stations. But we need to take a look at the area where the voting is going to happen and where people are going to park and how they're going to get in and out. We don't want people interfering with the regular process within the school and kids being put at risk.

The other point I want to raise very quickly is, we also need to be careful from the security side. You have had people in the polling stations, and I've heard this from different elections, where people going in to vote got lost in the school and ended up walking in the hallways. That may not be a good thing for reasons—people can draw

their own conclusions. I think we have to be a little bit more careful around that particular issue.

1530

The other issue we need to take a look at—the other thing that drove me crazy, and I'm running out of time; I'm not going to have enough time—is that when people were badly enumerated and we had awful polls, we had people voting across town or cross-city or from municipality to municipality.

I'll give you a little example. I had people who lived in Kapuskasing who had to drive to Moonbeam to go and vote. That's a municipality a 20-minute drive outside of Kapuskasing. I had other people in Moonbeam who were registered to vote in Smooth Rock Falls, which is almost an hour down Highway 11. Obviously there were a lot of people who did not vote because, they said, "I've always voted in Moonbeam all my life, and I'm not about to get in my car and drive to Smooth Rock Falls to vote."

For God's sake, please let's get ourselves together and make sure that people are put on the voter's list at a polling station that is convenient for them to vote within their own community and their neighbourhood. But in the event that there is an error, we need a system so that the person is able to vote in a polling station, period.

For example, let's say I'm working in Kapuskasing that day but I live in Timmins, and I'm still in the riding of Timmins–James Bay. That person may have forgotten or not had a chance to go to an advance poll vote. You should have the ability to walk into a polling station, prove your identity, have yourself added to the list and basically vote. That stuff is all cross-referenced at the end.

It was interesting: I met with the Chief Electoral Officer, John Hollins, after the election, and he told me there is very little voter fraud when it comes to people adding themselves to the list.

There are only 20 seconds left. I just say to this committee that there's this and many other issues that we need to take a look at when reviewing the Electoral Act. We need to take this job seriously and hope it is not a partisan issue, or a partisan thing, that the government is doing in order to help themselves in our next election tryout. We need to have an election act that works for the public and all those people involved.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak? The member for—

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Leeds–Grenville. Thank you very much, Speaker. Sorry, I was in conversation under the gallery.

I appreciate the opportunity to very briefly speak to this. Our party, the Progressive Conservative Party, the official opposition, is supporting the motion. I will be also sharing my time with Mr. Yakabuski, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

I did want to take this opportunity to express a few concerns that I think are appropriate for review by the select committee. The major concern we've been raising in this Legislature for the past two weeks is the involve-

ment of a group called Working Families in the last two provincial elections and how that falls within the purview of the election expenses act itself, and whether indeed there have been violations with respect to the third party, in this case Working Families, coordinating its activities with those of a registered political party, in this instance the Liberal Party of Ontario. We have serious concerns about that. We've raised issues related to that, and a series of what some might describe as coincidences, but we believe they may be much more than that and merit investigation.

I mentioned in this House on a couple of occasions an article that was in the June 15, 2007, edition of the Toronto Star, written by the former Queen's Park correspondent for the Star, Ian Urquhart. That article appeared, as I said, June 15, and he was indicating that, looking ahead with a fixed election date, we knew the election was going to be in October and that Working Families was looking at re-forming in preparation for that election, and a decision on when to proceed would be made the following week.

The following week—to be precise, on June 18—purely by accident we, through a Freedom of Information request, discovered that the principals and those involved in the organization, Working Families, had met with the Minister of Finance at the time, Mr. Sorbara, who also served as chairman of the Liberal Party election campaign. We subsequently attempted to secure the minutes or an agenda from that meeting and were told that none existed, that there were no minutes of that meeting. No one had any knowledge of what transpired in that meeting.

So I think that if you look at Mr. Urquhart's column, the meeting happening and then, I think very shortly thereafter, one of the participants in that meeting contributed \$150,000 to Working Families; there's a whole series of issues. This goes back, obviously, to 2003 and the relationship of third parties.

I know the province of Alberta has recently talked about bringing in legislation to ban third party advertising during writ periods. Apparently, some of the people involved in Working Families in Ontario also participated in the recent provincial election in the province of Alberta in an attempt to defeat the Progressive Conservative Party in that province, unsuccessfully.

Also, there's an organization called Working Families in the great country of Australia. Again, these are unions, primarily made up of private and public sector unions, who spent more than all of the registered political parties in the federal election in Australia. So this is not just an Ontario phenomenon. It's happening now across Canada, in Australia and in who knows how many other jurisdictions.

It should be troubling to anyone who cares about free and democratic elections. We should be concerned with respect to the select committee's review of the election expenses act and what they will be considering as part of that review. I think this is a very important issue for the select committee to consider during their deliberations.

I have to point out that almost a year ago now we wrote Mr. Hollins, who was the election expenses commissioner, expressing our concerns and providing him with a very detailed letter with our concerns related to whether the act had been violated and whether Working Families, in coordination with the Liberal Party of Ontario, had collaborated. If they had done such, that activity would be subject to all the controls, contribution limits and spending limits that govern registered parties. If you look just at 2003, that would have meant that the Liberal Party was significantly in violation of the spending limits under the act.

We wrote that letter and followed it up with another letter a few weeks ago to Mr. Hollins, expressing serious concern about their failure to respond to that letter. Mr. Hollins is leaving in two or three more weeks. He is, in his position, an officer of the assembly. In that role he's responsible to all members of this place—to all members of this place. I don't like to be critical of the gentleman, as his days wind down in office, but we believe he has a moral responsibility to respond prior to departure and not leave this on the doorstep of his successor, whoever that may be. It's a very serious issue.

I'm certainly encouraging our representative, who I believe will be Mr. Sterling, the member for Carleton–Mississippi Mills, who is a dean of this place and certainly very knowledgeable with respect to all pieces of legislation the select committee will be reviewing—I'm certainly urging him to take a very proactive role in looking at this whole issue of third parties and ensuring that whoever succeeds Mr. Hollins will deal with this in an effective way, and that all Ontarians can feel comfortable as we go forward that the election laws of this province are not being subverted in any way, shape or form.

1540

Mr. John Yakabuski: My colleague from Leeds–Grenville, the Leader of the Opposition, left me ample time to make the points that I have to make. In fact, I've got 20 minutes now, according to this. I don't think I'm going to need all of that, but I did want to make some comments.

I'm actually pleased that there is some kind of an action on the part of this legislative body. If this select committee is going to be empowered to do what I'm talking about today, I'm going to be even more pleased.

I wanted to talk about the 2007 election. When the government tabled Bill 214, which was the Election Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005, by the then minister for democratic renewal or whatever it was—the Honourable Marie Bountrogianni—one of the premises behind this piece of legislation was to improve the workings of elections and thereby encourage more people to get out and vote. In the 2007 election, after we approved this legislation, we went to the lowest voter turnout in the history of this province. Part of the reason was some of the things that they did in this legislation and how it made it so difficult for people to get out and vote.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Big turnout in Barry's Bay.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, it wasn't a big turnout in Barry's Bay. I'm just responding to the member for Peterborough. He likes to talk whenever I'm talking. He makes a point of coming in here. I don't think they're giving him enough speaking time.

The percentage in my riding in 2003 was 64%. In 2007, 59% was the voter turnout in my riding—still high relative to the rest of the province, but much lower than it had been in 2003. Part of the reason was some of the changes and some of the enforcement that was done as a result of Bill 214.

Let me talk about this silly notion about the rules that apply in Toronto, where nobody seems to know each other. I live on a floor in an apartment building, and some of the people on that floor I've never even met, but in Barry's Bay, Renfrew, Pembroke, Arnprior or Brockville they know one another.

We had situations in the last election where somebody would go in to vote, and they would be in a room full of people where everyone knew each other, and these would be senior citizens who are intimidated, to say the least, when somebody says, "Where's your photo ID?" "Oh, but you know me." "Where's your photo ID?" That was the kind of thing that was going on at this last election. We'd have senior citizens come in. They almost wanted to turn around; in fact, some people did turn around, and they failed to exercise their franchise. So what did we accomplish in this bill?

We also had other people who went through the process but felt absolutely insulted by it. I had people come up to me after the election and say to me, "John, I voted for you in the last election, but I won't be voting for you again"—and, before those Liberals over there get themselves encouraged, I just want to finish the job here—"because I won't be voting for anybody," is what they said, "because I've exercised my last vote in an Ontario provincial election because of the way you treat people," because of the way you insult them when they walk into a polling place and they have to identify themselves with a picture ID when everybody in that room, every DRO, every poll clerk—sometimes three times they have to—

Mr. Robert W. Runciman: Give your name three times.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —give your name three times, your address, recite it. I went through it myself. I had no problem with it, but I'm going to tell you: People like my mother-in-law, Elma Smith, from Eganville—who turned 75 today, by the way. Happy birthday, Elma. My wife will give me the gears for doing this, but—

Mr. Jeff Leal: She used to support Conway, didn't she?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I don't know—no; not likely.

Look: You tell that member from Peterborough that he's going to get his turn.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I didn't see it.

Anyway, she feels intimidated by that. My mother-in-law was born in Germany. She certainly never went to school in this country. I'm not sure what schooling she

would have had in Germany, but she was a war refugee, basically. She never drove a car in her life either, by the way, so she doesn't have a driver's licence picture ID. She had a hard time finding the necessary pieces of identification to go to vote because her citizenship papers were burned when they lost their home in 1975. So there are all kinds of different things surrounding that, but you have to go through that same rigmarole, answer all those intimidating questions. I heard this time and time again from people, and it's all because of voting irregularities in the cities, where people were voting twice, they were voting fraudulently. So now we bring in a system that says everybody is going to have to go through this kind of repetitive process.

I see some Liberal members nodding because the same things went on in their ridings. This is not just about Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. This is for the good of all of the province of Ontario. When you make changes and they turn out to be worse than what you had before—and the best arbitrator of that is the voter turnout. When we go to the lowest voter turnout in the history of this province, it should tell you that something is wrong. I spoke to Mr. Hollins about this after the election, and he agreed: The numbers that we showed were disgraceful.

The fact that we had this referendum and everything else—you would have thought that maybe there might be a higher voter turnout because there might be some people who are more interested in voting because there was a referendum on the ballot that they may be interested in, whether they'd be for the referendum or opposed to the referendum, but it may give them more incentive to vote. But in spite of that, fewer people than ever—not fewer people in numbers, but a lower percentage of people voted in the past provincial election than ever in the history of the province of Ontario.

So you have to ask yourself, "Did we do the right thing?" The answer has to be no. I'm not saying that everything about Bill 214 was wrong or was bad, but clearly, in the final analysis, what it accomplished was more bad than it was good, to put it bluntly. "Bad" and "good" is a pretty stark way of saying it, I suppose, but for the sake of argument, we'll just say it that way.

There has to be something done between now and the next provincial election, because it should be the responsibility and the desire of this chamber to ensure that every person who has the right to vote in the province of Ontario is given every opportunity to do just that. We should not erect obstacles in their way that in fact discourage them from voting.

There's no question about it: We don't want people voting fraudulently, and we don't want people who don't have the right to vote going in and casting a ballot. We don't want any of those kinds of election irregularities. We want the elections to be clean, we want them to be honest and we want them to be fair. But at the same time, we have to find that balance so that each and every person who has the right to vote in this province or any other province, any jurisdiction—the mantra, the desire and what our goal should be is that we see voter turnouts

increase continuously in this province, because the best way of ensuring that you have elected the government that is the choice of the people is by having the highest voter turnout; then the most people who can exercise their franchise have indeed done that, exercised their franchise. So the government of the day can at least say they have the support of X number of people. If you extrapolate it, and I haven't done the math, I think the government got about 42% or 43% of the vote in the last provincial election—42-point-something. But if it's 42-point-something of 51, how many people actually voted for the government, or, in my case, how many people actually voted for me?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: This isn't a new problem.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, I didn't say it was a new problem—I'm looking at the minister of consumer and business services, or something like that; I got it pretty close there. I'm not even going to try the riding. It's tougher: Ancaster something or other. You know what I mean.

1550

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Plus they changed the name.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It changed from the last time.

He says it's not a new problem. I'm not saying it's a new problem, but maybe it's time for a new solution so we don't see the 50% or 51% voter turnout in the last election go down to 49%, 47% or 46%.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Do you want to do what they do in Australia?

Mr. John Yakabuski: The minister is asking me a question. It's not question period, but I'm going to answer the question anyway. They're not used to questions being asked and answered, but I'm going to try.

No, I don't think we should do what they do in Australia. I don't think we should make it compulsory to go out and vote. It should be voluntary, but we should do everything we can to encourage people to vote and not erect obstacles in their way, which is exactly what happened in the last provincial election.

I can't emphasize strongly enough that it should be part of this committee's mandate to ensure that when we go into the election period in 2011, we've done everything we possibly can do to ensure that each and every person who has the right to vote in this province is encouraged to do so and, in fact, may do so.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to follow the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, and I'm going to pick up where he left off. I don't think Toronto is a cold and distant place. We have many neighbourhoods and communities where many people know each other quite well. But I do agree that there was a very onerous requirement with photo identification, and I want to speak in part about why that's an onerous requirement for those who live marginalized lifestyles.

We have many people in south Parkdale who live rough, as it's called, who move from room to room, who sometimes are homeless due, in part, to the economic policies of the members opposite. Then, when it comes time to exercise their franchise, another hurdle is thrown

their way. People who are thrown hurdles every hour of their existence are thrown yet another hurdle, and the hurdle is photo identification. As the member pointed out, that's often difficult if you don't have a driver's licence. It's very difficult for people who live rough and are homeless, because the first thing that gets stolen is their identification, and there's a continual treadmill to try to get new identification.

Luckily, we knew in advance, and I want to praise those from Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre, who worked with their clientele. It's a large drop-in in my community. A lot of people go there to eat every day. They serve thousands every year, and they know their clients. They know them really well; they know them on a first-name basis. They were able to help them get the necessary identification, but, boy, it was a struggle. So that's an issue that really has to be looked at going into the next election.

What I would really like to spend some time on is to ask everybody here to cast their minds back to a by-election—my by-election—that happened in 2005. I won an empty seat. It was vacated by a certain man of mystery, Gerard Kennedy. Does anybody remember him? I don't know what he's doing now. For personal, ambitious reasons, he left the people of Parkdale-High Park to go elsewhere. We—all of us—aren't quite clear where, but he went elsewhere. So the riding opened up, and I ran. It was an interesting and eye-opening experience, first of all, for a woman to run, and second, for a United Church minister to run in a riding where, when the Liberal Party found they were losing in the polls, they unleashed what John McGrath called one of the worst smear campaigns ever.

My suggestion for this particular committee is that people look at the ethics of how they campaign. I have to say that I hope things improve, but I suspect that they haven't, because I already see cyber-bullying, for example, on behalf of those across the way. Of course, the same people will stand up very self-righteously and talk about how cyber-bullying is a very bad thing in our schools and for our children, and then engage in the practice themselves against members of the opposition on YouTube.

Why don't we look at the ethics of campaigning? That would be something this committee could look at. In my case, I was stunned, I was outraged to see cabinet ministers at the subways handing out smear campaign material that attacked my integrity as a United Church minister, my standing in my community, my congregation, through me, and my family. That kind of campaigning should be looked at. It is absolutely unacceptable, and they're at it again. Presumably, this is a new move, or certainly a move towards the ugly, seamy side of American politics—not to single out our brothers and sisters to the south; I'm sure it's done around the world, but it was new to me. I was outraged. I had no idea that a political party could sink so low, but they did. So if there's anything that this committee needs to look at, it's the ethics of the way in which political parties campaign; certainly I would point that out.

Second of all, of course what's really important is the way that campaigns are financed. I hold up here some examples of places that do that way better. Federally, each party receives 50% of expenses incurred. If it obtains 2% of valid votes overall or 5% of valid votes, that's better. In Quebec, it's better. If a party receives 1% of votes, the party receives 50% of incurred expenses, to a maximum of 60 cents per elector. Manitoba and Saskatchewan similarly—I could go into those, but suffice to say they're not allowed to take donations from corporations or unions.

There was a very interesting article by Murray Campbell in the *Globe and Mail* some months back. He described the experience of going to a Liberal fundraiser and then to a Progressive Conservative fundraiser. Interestingly enough, he discovered the same corporations sitting there, the same corporations hedging their bets, donating to both parties. For example, asked why he attended a \$10,000-a-plate Liberal fundraiser, developer Silvio DeGasperis said bluntly, "I wanted to speak to Dalton about my [development] issue in Pickering. I knew the reason I was there." That certainly has to stop.

We, in the New Democratic Party, have long called for an end to union donations, corporation donations. This needs to stop. Even Allan Taylor, a former CEO of the Royal Bank of Canada, said, "Financially effective as it may be, the current system of corporate fundraising doesn't help with [the] broader purpose [of] continuing the democratization of our politics." This committee should not only look at the ethics of the way in which campaigns are run, it should also look at the way campaigns are financed.

Another aspect of elections that it should look at is the way our votes are cast and counted. It was quite a travesty the way citizens from this province, who put in hours of their own time, weekends away from their families, to listen to a number of deputants about different systems of voting, had the rug pulled out from them just when they presented their findings, and that of course was the mixed member proportional findings.

Interestingly enough, the bill that was brought in calling for a "yes" vote in at least 60% of all valid referendum ballots cast and a "yes" vote in more than 50% of valid referendum ballots cast in 60% of the ridings—at least 64 electoral districts—was ridiculously high. I mean, this by a government that was elected with 42% of the vote. A government with 42% of the vote demands this of the electorate when looking at the way in which we vote. Along with everything else, it was mixed in with the general election instead of being set apart as a referendum unto itself with the proper explanations given, the proper education offered. It was sad the way that citizens' committee was used and abused. Their findings and their recommendations were treated as if these were the ideas of some crackpot instead of ideas that have led to proportional representation in over 70 countries in the world. Over 70 countries in the world use some form of proportional representation, and yet this idea was not given the light of day, was not given its due merits. Again, I feel sorry for them.

1600

Here are the points that I'm going to make, and my colleague from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek is going to offer his input as well.

Number one: Let's look at the ethics of campaigning. As we all know in this chamber, the campaign started the day after the last campaign was won or lost, as the case may be. Certainly, if what's happening on YouTube with cyber-bullying of opposition members is any indication, this government's ethics have not improved since the last election. That's number one.

Number two: Let's look at the way campaigns are financed. Let's make that fair. Let's bring that in line with our federal brothers and sisters.

Number three: Let's look at perhaps giving a citizens' group their real shrift in terms of taking their ideas seriously about the very election process we engage in.

I might add a subtle fourth one, and that is simply that once you get here, once you get elected, we should be looking at the change in standing orders. The so-called reason given that it's family-friendly, we all know, is absolutely no reason to change when question period happens. That needs to be looked at too. In fact, for most women in this chamber, certainly for most in the opposition, it has added two hours to our day; it hasn't taken away any time at all or given us any more time to spend with our families. It has actually taken that away.

I'll leave some time for my colleague, but again, we will be watching closely what this committee comes up with. I will be watching, only so that we can encourage women in the future to run and not have to put up with and go through what I went through and put up with: the ethics of the campaigning of the Liberal Party of Ontario.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to touch on a few things that haven't been discussed about the election process. One of the things that stood out in my mind during my election was the fact that people were not notified about the changing of polling stations. Some of them were sent to one, two or three different polling stations. By the time they got to the third one, they'd given up and decided not to vote, and they had voted all their lives. That especially is a burden to the elderly population, who find it a struggle to get to the first polling station. I found that very alarming.

Second: questionable identity. I must say that I disagree with the speaker for the official opposition on the fact of identity cards. I believe that those are very important in an urban setting because of identity problems. The opposition person who ran against me from the ruling party—there were even people showing up who weren't Canadian citizens to vote. We caught this on more than one occasion, which I found really upsetting—that someone would pull a stunt like that.

When I went through the process of setting up the election, we were discussing new or future locations of polling stations. I found that people from the three, four or five parties that ran were arguing over location due to a strategic advantage. Some people would prefer to have it at a certain school or a certain church because it was an

advantage to them because it was in walking distance of some of their strong support areas, which I find is unfair and not democratic. That has to be looked at also.

I must commend the returning officer, Ms. Joyce Newman, from my area. She did a wonderful job under duress and under stress for lack of volunteers, lack of training time and a host of other problems that cropped up during the election which she dealt with very professionally. Luckily, in my area I had a person with a lot of experience, so she really handled it quickly and efficiently.

I must say that there are a lot of things that are wrong with the process. This committee being struck is a good thing, but I hope that some of the problems that I faced won't fall on deaf ears as we bring it forward through the discussion period.

The outgoing administrator was faced with these problems for many, many years. He did meet with resistance, whether it was from the governing body or other parties, to leave the system the way it was. A lot of them were happy as long as they were on top, but when things changed, they had a problem with it. So he was doing a balancing act all the way through the system: "Should I change this? Should I not? Is the governing party happy? Is the opposition not?" This went on and on for many years. It's long overdue.

I'd just like to touch on the financial aspect. I agree with my fellow member about making it similar to the federal in having non-union and non-corporate donations. The corporate donations in my area favoured the individual from the governing party in reference to developers and builders. They weren't big on donating to our party for whatever reason, but they seem to have had an upper hand on decisions in our community. I don't think that's fair. I think the system should be based on money given back from the government on your percentage, like the amount per voter.

So there are a lot of disadvantages to the present system that can be rectified in an expedient manner. I believe we should move in that direction quickly and make these elections fair and up front.

Identity has been a big problem in our area for people that are eligible to vote. There were even times when taxis were pulling up in front of polling stations with people who weren't even from our area. Because they were so busy, and the polling clerks were so busy, sometimes they didn't ask for ID; sometimes they'd push through. There were people voting who were deceased.

These are the kinds of games that go on. They've got to be stopped. If we run these elections more fairly, and without the personal attacks that my colleague went through, maybe the results will be a little different. Maybe people will have more of a say on the outcome of the provincial election when not being influenced by big money, intimidation and rumours. I think it's just terrible, some of the things that some parties will do to win.

We all want a fair process. We're all, here, decent people trying to do the right thing. But some of the things the people in this Legislature will do on YouTube and

other things are below their position, below their moral right.

I hope in the future that this is dealt with quickly, with a lot of thought and a lot of compassion behind it. It's been a pretty cold process for too many years, and I want to see it changed.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

Mr. Caplan has moved a motion providing for the appointment of a Select Committee on Elections. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Agreed to.

PHOTO CARD ACT, 2008

LOI DE 2008 SUR LES CARTES-PHOTO

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 10, 2008, on the motion for second reading of Bill 85, An Act to permit the issuance of photo cards to residents of Ontario and to make complementary amendments to the Highway Traffic Act/ Projet de loi 85, Loi permettant la délivrance de cartes-photo aux résidents de l'Ontario et apportant des modifications complémentaires au Code de la route.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Miller, the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, had the floor at the last debate, when it was brought forward. Do you wish to continue?

Mr. Paul Miller: Yes, I did have the floor, Mr. Speaker. No, thank you, I'm happy with the present situation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Further debate? Does any other member wish to speak?

Mr. Bradley has moved government order number 85, second reading of Bill 85, An Act to permit the issuance of photo cards to residents of Ontario and to make complementary amendments to the Highway Traffic Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): This bill will be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

Orders of the day.

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 9 o'clock Thursday morning, June 12.

The House adjourned at 1610.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Brownell, Jim (L)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
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	
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Craitor, Kim (L)	Niagara Falls	
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	
Dhillon, Vic (L)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (L)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (ND)	Parkdale–High Park	
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Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (L)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
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Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (L)	Oakville	
Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (L)	Mississauga East–Cookville / Mississauga-Est–Cookville	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 (L)	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	
Jeffrey, Linda (L)	Brampton–Springdale	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (ND)	Welland	New Democratic Party House leader / leader parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Kular, Kuldip (L)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (L)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (L)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (L)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (L)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
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	
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	
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	
Moridi, Reza (L)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (L)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (L)	Sault Ste. Marie	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (L)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. 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	
Ramsay, David (L)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (L)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader of the Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (L)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (L)	York West / York-Ouest	
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	
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	
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	Second Deputy Chair of the committee of the whole House / Deuxième Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	Opposition House leader / leader parlementaire de l'opposition
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	

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Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Jeff Leal
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Jeff Leal, Reza Moridi, Yasir Naqvi,
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski, David Zimmer
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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Kevin Flynn
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Joe Dickson, Kevin Flynn, Sylvia Jones,
Norm Miller, Mario Sergio, Peter Tabuns
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel, David Zimmer
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Règlements et projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Paul Miller
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle, Kim Craiton,
Gerry Martiniuk, Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch,
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht, Mario Sergio
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Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
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Helena Jaczek, Dave Levac, Shafiq Qaadri,
Khalil Ramal, Laurie Scott, Peter Shurman
Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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