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Monday 27 April 2009

Lundi 27 avril 2009

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 27 April 2009

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 27 avril 2009

The House met at 1030.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by a moment of silence for personal thought and inner reflection.

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I have a bit of a list here for welcoming people. There are going to be names that I miss, but I know that the individual members will—today we are privileged to have the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and members of the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards. We want to welcome warmly all of the guests that are here: Chief Dan Parkinson from Cornwall, who is the new president; Chief Kent Moore; Chief Dan Rivett; Chief Bob Herman; Chief Rene Berger; Deputy Commissioner Chris Lewis; Deputy Chief Bob Kates; Chief Brian Mullan; Chief Richard Laperriere; Chief Denis Poole; Chief Mike Metcalfe; Deputy Chief Mark Neelin; Deputy Chief Thomlinson; Inspector Steve Beckett; Chief Gary Smith; Deputy Chief Joe Matthews; Chief Matt Torigian; Chief Derek McElveny; Chief Ian Davidson; Mary Smiley, who's the chair of the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards; along with other members.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I want to introduce Hook Avenue residents who are spending the day here at Queen's Park: Marla DiGiacomo, Mary Boudart, Roxanne MacKenzie, Megan Finlayson, Glenn Sernyk, Bryce Smith, Roxanne McKenzie, Margaret Marissen, Dominique Beaulieu, Angela Rentzelos, Dawn Elasherck, Carol Ursa, John Sweeney, Jonathon Wilkinson, Claude Bergeron and Sylvia Bergeron. Welcome all.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'd like to welcome to the east gallery the deputy chief of the great city of London, Ian Peer, who is with us here today.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that all members of this Legislature be permitted to wear red carnations this morning in recognition of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Month.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I welcome today to question period Bruce Bishins, Simon Parry and Paul Vynslysky. Each have been affected by the Conquest closure. I'm pleased that they're here today.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'd like to introduce the Honourable Pauline Browes, former member of Parliament for Scarborough Centre, in the west members' gallery.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to welcome two famous guests from my riding of Durham: One of them is the chief of Durham Regional Police, Mike Ewles, as well as Mike Roche, who is a leader in the MS Society for Durham region. I'd like to welcome them here to Queen's Park today.

Hon. David Caplan: I too was going to introduce Mike Roche, from the MS Society, but there are several others: We have Jeanette Elliott, Lynda DaSilva, Andrea Butcher-Milne, Gordon Keith, Barbara Dickson, Jan Richardson, Stacey Trottier-Mousseau, Yassemin Cohan-im and Mike Augustine, all here to bring awareness to multiple sclerosis.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'd like to welcome to the House today—I'm not sure where they are at this point—Jeanette Elliott, chair of the Simcoe county chapter of the MS Society, along with Susan Latter—I know that Kim Steele has coordinated a lot of this today. I'm not sure whether the minister mentioned Deputy Commissioner Chris Lewis, who is here in the House today. I have already met with him.

Mr. Bruce Crozier: I would like to introduce a good friend and a member of the Lakeshore police services board, Mike Fenchack, all the way from the great county of Essex.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'd like to welcome Chief Armand La Barge, from York region.

Mr. Dave Levac: I'd like to introduce today a high school buddy of mine who grew up to become chief of police for the city of Brantford, Derek McElveny, and also the police services board chair, Mr. Larry Kings. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Mike Colle: I would like to introduce the great transit advocate and chair of the region of York, Bill Fisch.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I would like to welcome Jan Richardson, who is here with the MS Society, and deputy chief of police Al Williams, who are both here from my riding.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I'd like to welcome Deputy Chief Bob Percy, from Halton region, to the House this morning.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to welcome the police chief from Hamilton, Brian Mullan—if he's brought anyone else, I didn't get the names.

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: Joining me are Chief Ewles, Deputy Chief Whiteway and chair of the police services board, Terry Clayton. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to welcome, in the Speaker's Gallery today, Michael Barrett,

chief executive officer, and Norm Gamble, board chair, of the South West LHIN. Welcome to Queen's Park.

To anyone who is feeling left out with our massive round of introductions today, welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: A question to the Minister of Finance: Will you confirm in the House today that your new sales tax grab will raise the price of gasoline, mutual fund investment fees, morning coffee and doughnuts, home heating fuel, home electricity, natural gas, home Internet service, home TV service, cellphone charges, rink rental fees and magazine subscriptions. Can you please confirm the accuracy of that list and tell us what the impact of that tax grab will be on a typical Ontario middle-class family?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: What I can confirm is that this government is cutting small-business taxes by 18%; I can confirm that we're cutting the manufacturing and processing tax by 17%; I can confirm that we're cutting the general corporate tax rate by close to 33%; and finally, unlike the member opposite who votes against everything this government does, I can confirm we're cutting personal taxes by \$10.6 billion: the right response at the right time for this province and its people.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, thank you. I don't think the minister quite answered my question on that long and growing list of everyday items that are going to take even more taxes out of the pocketbooks of middle-class families and seniors. In fact, at the worst possible time when middle-class families are making difficult choices between paying the bills at the end of the month and filling up their grocery carts, Dalton McGuinty wants to go back at them with this massive sales tax grab. According to the *Toronto Star*—we always believe what we read in the *Toronto Star*—an internal government memo is now calling on ministers to go out and try to shore up support for your ill-advised tax grab.

Minister, wouldn't it be better to just drop your ill-advised tax grab altogether and get your ministers working on job creation for Ontario families instead?

1040

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Let me just tell the member opposite what others have said about the government's plan. Let's talk about Jack Mintz, the Palmer Chair in Public Policy at the University of Calgary: "Sales tax harmonization will reap large benefits to the Ontario economy. The McGuinty government will go down in history for its leadership in moving ahead with a major tax reform that will only help the Ontario economy in the long run."

That's what it's about. It's about rebuilding this economy as we come out of a world recession. It's about improving our competitiveness. It's about building new jobs

in the 21st century. It's not about that member saying, "No," and other members saying "Well, we'd do it, but we'd lower the rate." It's about taking a position, standing by it, building the long-term confidence in this economy and, ultimately, the ability to preserve our public health care system and our public education system and provide jobs for the thousands of people in Ontario who want new jobs—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'll tell the minister why he's going down in history. It's for the bizarre decision to hike taxes by some \$2.5 billion on middle-class families in the depths of an economic recession.

Let's look at one particular item: the cost of your new sales tax on gasoline. For a typical car, a Honda Civic for example, at a modest 80 cents per litre, it would cost a typical family more than \$200 per year because of your new sales tax grab. Minister does your Premier's internal memo also explain why it makes sense to increase the cost of travelling to work, taking your kids to swimming lessons or trying to find a way to visit family, particularly in the depths of a recession?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite forgets to tell people that we have the largest sales tax credit in Canada coming for those people, that Ontarians earning less than \$80,000 a year will see a cut in their overall taxes.

Let me remind the member what the Ontario Conservative Party wrote in their 2009 pre-budget submission. Here's what he said as finance critic: "The official opposition calls on this government to heed the call of the federal government and take immediate action to fix Ontario's uncompetitive tax structure." They say one thing and then say another thing. One member up there says to implement it but lower the rate; another member over there says it's the right thing.

This government has the interest of the Ontario economy and Ontario people at heart. We have the right plan to rebuild growth in this economy. When this world recession comes to an end, we will be bigger, we will be better, and we will be stronger.

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Minister of Finance: There are, no doubt, two different visions. Our vision is to lower the tax burden to help create jobs and help middle-class families. Yours is to go after the pocketbooks of families and seniors in the province.

The minister knows full well that this past February almost 28,000 jobs were lost in the construction sector. Instead of targeting taxes that are getting in the way of job creation, the government is going to make the housing crisis even worse with its new sales tax grab, meaning the cost of housing will be out of reach for middle-class families in the GTA, Ottawa and other urban centres. I say to the minister, the McGuinty government can help revive the housing market through a one-year

suspension of the land transfer tax, which would save homebuyers almost \$3,000 on the purchase of a \$300,000 home.

Will you deliver hope to the workers and to middle-class families through the suspension of the land transfer tax?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: This member just told us recently we shouldn't be spending on infrastructure. He wanted to take that stimulus out of the economy. He tells us not to cut corporate taxes; then he's going to vote against that. He tells us not to cut personal taxes; then he wants to vote against that.

The Conservative Party is adrift and lost. They don't have a view of the future of this province. They don't have a single idea about making this economy grow faster. I say to the member opposite, vote for our tax cuts; vote for the \$10.6 billion in tax cuts; vote for a more efficient sales tax. Vote for a stronger future when the time comes in this Legislature, sir, because we will be bigger, we will be stronger, we will come through this, as the world economy will. I look forward to hearing at least some element of consistency in the point of view of that party opposite.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: It would have been interesting, actually, if the member had the courage to put his sales tax grab in his budget bill, to see how many Liberal members would have voted it down. They're hearing the same thing in their ridings about this tax grab from middle-class families and seniors that we are.

Minister, I believe in private sector job creation, and I believe that when the auto sector is in tough times we need construction firing on all cylinders to create jobs in our economy and to help middle-class families.

The Ontario Real Estate Association has estimated that your sales tax grab will increase the cost of buying even a modestly priced home by some \$2,000, and the tax on a new home will be even higher.

Minister, will you at least commit to cancelling your sales tax grab, to provide relief to our housing industry and to help struggling families pay their bills?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member opposite again only tells part of the story. He neglects to talk about will be the most generous home purchase credit around in Canada when the new harmonized single tax is in place. In fact, when other provinces have gone to a single sales tax, new home sales have actually gone up, even though they didn't have the credit we did.

Our economy is in an unprecedented world crisis. We have laid out a plan. It is a challenging plan that calls upon all of us to work together. That's why we're cutting corporate taxes. That's why we're cutting small business taxes. That's why Ontario families will be paying less overall in taxes. We will have a more efficient, more productive economy that will seize the opportunity when the world economy begins to recover. That's what this budget is about. That's what this party is about. That's why we have a clear and consistent—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: What Ontario is experiencing is a crisis of leadership. Dalton McGuinty's failed leadership has chased some 300,000 manufacturing jobs from the province and made Ontario dead last in economic growth in all of Canada.

I say to the minister, we need jobs created today; we need to help out middle-class families today. The land transfer tax will help create jobs in construction immediately—if you give a land-transfer-tax holiday and help families purchase their first home. Secondly, Minister, I call upon you to have a tax holiday on new hires. Eliminate the payroll tax on new hires to help small businesses hire more people and create job opportunities for middle-class families. Will the Minister of Finance act on either or both of those initiatives to create jobs and bring hope to families in Ontario today?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The leading manufacturers in this province have all said that the most important thing we can do is a single sales tax that will decrease the cost of our exports.

The member opposite won't listen to me. Maybe he'll listen to Jim Flaherty, who said that the single sales tax is the single most important step that provinces with RSTs can take to stimulate new business investment, create jobs and improve Canada's overall economic competitiveness. He may want to talk to one of his principal supporters for the Conservative leadership, a fellow who used to be the Premier of Ontario. Here's what he said: "Provinces are further encouraged to harmonize their provincial sales taxes with the federal goods and services tax (GST), which already exempts business inputs. This would provide a double benefit by also reducing by one half the paperwork required for businesses to collect and remit...."

Interjection: Who said that?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mike Harris said that. I don't—

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

INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Deputy Premier. More than 100 people in Mexico have already died from the swine flu, and now there are six Canadian cases. Ontarians want assurances that this government can handle a potential global pandemic. On their behalf I ask you, is Ontario prepared?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. David Caplan: I thank the member for the question. I am, of course, always concerned about the health of Ontarians, and Ontario is working very closely with the Public Health Agency of Canada concerning the occurrence of human swine flu in Mexico and the United States.

The member asked specifically, is Ontario prepared? Here's what Ontario is doing. We have alerted physicians

and hospitals in the province to be vigilant in keeping a lookout for any cases exhibiting symptoms of influenza-like illness amongst patients, particularly those who have travelled to Mexico in the two weeks. We've had regular teleconferences, and we'll network with local medical officers of health this week, providing updates as we receive them from federal authorities. We've sent written directives to all public health units, providing recommended actions they can share with health providers in their jurisdiction.

There is much more, but I want to quote Dr. Allison McGeer of Mount Sinai Hospital. She says, "We should be celebrating the level of transparency of communication.... This is an"—

1050

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: At a press conference Thursday, it took more than 10 minutes to get a straight answer from the acting chief medical officer of health about whether or not there were any suspected cases in Ontario, and after 10 minutes, Dr. Williams said there were 10 cases under investigation in this province.

My question is this: Are they still under investigation? How many have been ruled out, and when will the public be notified?

Hon. David Caplan: I was finishing up my quote from Dr. McGeer and I will finish it. She said, "We should be celebrating the level of transparency of communication.... This is an excellent marker for how things have gotten better since SARS in terms of us being able to coordinate things internationally."

In fact, there are no confirmed cases of this particular flu here in the province of Ontario. There are, on an active and ongoing basis, about 10 to 12 cases that officials are looking at and doing the testing for. In fact, some of those tests come back negative, and I do expect that others will emerge as individuals present themselves to physicians and there is additional testing.

I can tell you that I have tremendous confidence in Dr. David Williams. He was, of course, the official in his public health network that was able to catch and contain listeria and the listeriosis outbreak here in the province of Ontario. I know that everything is being done—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's exactly communications that are the key here. Ontario's public health units, the backbone of defence against pandemics, continue to be sorely unprepared. More than one third—and this minister knows it—of Ontario's public health units lack a permanent chief medical officer of health.

When will this government understand that as long as public health is under-resourced in this province, Ontarians are at greater risk?

Hon. David Caplan: The member's comments, first of all, are inaccurate. They're also unhelpful. This member, unfortunately, should not be sharing that kind of information. In fact, resources for public health have only

increased under this government, unlike the experiences under the New Democrats, where there were cuts to public health and downloading of public health to the municipal level. In fact, there is a full-time medical officer of health in every health unit in the province of Ontario, but some are in acting positions, which is why, with our agreement with the Ontario Medical Association, we have worked to enhance the resources and supports for those individuals to help with the recruitment and the retention of them. In fact, just last week, I had the opportunity to introduce Dr. Arlene King to this House. She has identified this as an area of priority for her going forward, working with public health officials in the province of—

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

INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The bottom line is, this government hasn't learned. It has not learned from the SARS—

Interjection.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm sorry; the new question is for the Acting Premier.

The bottom line is, the government hasn't learned. We want clear communication and the people of this province deserve that straight-out information, and we are not getting it. I'm asking this minister very clearly, this Acting Premier very clearly, and the question is this—I'm going to quote because I think it's important. What was said in the Globe and Mail is this, from the chief medical officer of health—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Please continue.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Canada's chief public health officer said this in the Globe and Mail: "Nobody should take this for granted in any way. It"—the fact that the cases have been mild—"doesn't mean we won't see either more severe illness or more potential deaths."

The US has declared swine flu a public health emergency. I ask again: What is this government doing to prepare the people of Ontario for this possible pandemic?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. David Caplan: The member allows her rhetoric to get the better of her. Unfortunately for her, the facts of the case are that public health officials here in the Ministry of Health and the Public Health Agency of Canada are working very closely to keep each other informed, but more importantly, to keep the public informed about what to do.

I want to emphasize that Ontario has an excellent public health surveillance system. Ontarians should feel confident that their public health care providers are closely monitoring the situation and that the system is in place to be able to respond.

I am and have been in constant contact with the federal Minister of Health about the situation, have had ongoing discussions—in fact, just this morning—with the

chief medical officer of health in the province of Ontario, have provided and will be providing information, and have made the offer to all party leaders and critics to be able to be apprised of the situation.

I think the member has an unfortunate sense that she has some kind of a political issue here. Regrettably, this is—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The cases in Canada—four in Nova Scotia and two in BC— are both linked to travel to Mexico. Are the Ontario people being told not to travel to Mexico? I don't believe they are.

In October 2005, then-Health Minister George Smitherman said this in this House: "Obviously, in an environment where there's lots of discussion about a pandemic, with a lot of uncertainty, frankly, about what the toll of that will be, it's important to provide people with timely information." But there wasn't timely information during SARS and the more recent listeriosis outbreak. Has this government learned from its past bungling, and does it finally have an appropriate communications strategy to deal with an outbreak?

Hon. David Caplan: The leader of the third party is incredibly irresponsible. I should hasten to say that in fact the appropriate level of communication has gone out and will continue to go out. But I would say this: The Ontario government does not issue travel advisories, as the member well knows. That is something that the Public Health Agency of Canada and the federal government will decide, if that is the appropriate step to take.

The World Health Organization has not issued a travel advisory for any of these jurisdictions, and I think for the member to suggest that a Ministry of Health of a province would want to be able to take that step ahead of the World Health Organization or a national body is, in a word, as I said, irresponsible, and beneath what a leader in this province should be able to do.

I would encourage this member to get some facts. I would encourage this member to work with us. I would want to share with the member—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The fact remains that the people of Ontario are very, very concerned about this potential pandemic. They need to have information and they need to have it very quickly. If nothing else, we have learned that lesson in this province, and this minister should have learned that lesson. So I'm going to ask one last time—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I'd just ask the Minister of Culture to relax a bit, please. Please continue.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm going to ask one last time: What is the process for keeping Ontarians informed about the suspected cases and about the current situation with this potential pandemic? Are the cases confirmed? Ninety-six hours later,

surely Ontarians need to have the information about what's happening on this file.

Hon. David Caplan: Ontarians do have the information on what's happening on this file. The only one who's muddying the waters is the member opposite.

We have medical professionals who are providing that information not only to Ontarians but to Canadians. We have a coordinated response and we have a public health surveillance system which is well in place and is working.

We have indeed learned the lessons from SARS. I understand that Dr. Donald Low was on CBC Newsworld earlier today saying that our ability to respond to, to identify, to contain and to control these kinds of situations has increased because of our understanding of what happened during SARS, and that Ontarians should have tremendous confidence in the ability of this province to respond.

I would encourage this member to be responsible as she talks to Ontarians. Her rhetoric is not helpful in this situation, and she should, I think, take pause and want to make sure that she acts in a manner befitting a leader in this province—

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

ENERGY RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure.

Throughout public hearings on Bill 150, we have heard repeatedly from presenters who are very concerned with the effect your power and tax grab disguise will have on the price of electricity in Ontario. Credible groups such as the consumers' council of Ontario, the Association of Power Producers of Ontario and the Association of Major Power Consumers in Ontario have all expressed their worry and concern about prices under your plan. All the while, to say the least, you've been duplicitous and inconsistent, saying one thing one day—

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

1100

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdraw—saying one thing one day and something quite different on another. Minister, you're not fooling anyone. It is time to admit that you haven't been forthcoming with the facts. It's time to be honest with Ontario. What is the total cost of the final implementation of Bill 150, your power and tax grab?

Hon. George Smitherman: Firstly, I want to say to the honourable member that unlike him, we've appreciated the broad view, the broad perspective that was brought to the debate, and we thank all of the members who participated throughout the seven days of hearings. They travelled to different parts of our province. They heard a wide variety of perspectives, and through the process at committee clause-by-clause, we're looking forward to the discussion around the amendments which would benefit and improve the bill. We want to say to the honourable member that that's the spirit we bring to it.

On the issue of support in the province for this, I just draw to the honourable member's attention that polls showing overwhelming support for the Green Energy Act in the province of Ontario have come out that show that 87% of respondents are in support of it.

On the price issue, we see 1% a year on the average bill for the people of the province of Ontario, but mostly we see opportunities for them to reduce the amount of energy and electricity that they use.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakubuski: Minister, your charade has to stop. The people deserve nothing less than the truth.

Let me read you a quote: "The point I'm trying to make is that the government has an obligation to ensure that it tells the people of this province that, as a result of its response to increasing rates, it's promoting conservation, and the initial effect of conservation will be to cause those rates to increase even further." That was Dalton McGuinty. He was really big on disclosure and coming clean when he was in opposition. Apparently, he doesn't feel that way anymore.

Minister, your power and tax disguise will have a real financial impact on families here in Ontario. You have invented job numbers which you cannot substantiate. You refuse to come clean on the true cost of this bill's implementation. You are now bringing forth amendments proving how flawed your bill really is. What is the financial impact of your power and tax grab, and will your proposed amendments have any effect on its final implementation cost?

Hon. George Smitherman: We want to thank the honourable member and the voice of a party that has, through the course of this debate, re-established itself as the tie-in to the coal barons in the province of Ontario. Through this debate, what we have witnessed is the regression of policy on the part of the official opposition. But through the amendments which we sincerely offer, we hope to encourage that party to lend support and to come forward and support the Green Energy Act.

As an example, we're going to provide an opt-out provision for the home energy audit. We're going to make sure that the principle of consultation is embedded in the legislation. We're going to substantially eliminate those powers that were raised by the honourable member around enforcement. We take these sincere steps, as we seek that party to come forward and to support this bill. All across the province of Ontario, communities, local distribution communities, municipalities and First Nations await the opportunity to bring new, renewable energy—

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

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Pregnant women in Ontario are increasingly worried about finding good health care for their children and for childbirth, worried about securing childcare for their babies, worried about new expenses and tax hikes

on everyday essentials that this government is about to implement on them. Now these women are worried about their jobs, too. According to the Ontario Human Rights Legal Support Centre, dozens and dozens of women have recently lost or are fearful of losing their jobs simply because they are pregnant. What is this government going to do to protect their rights?

Hon. George Smitherman: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I thank the member for the question. What I say to the member and I say to all Ontario workers is that any worker who feels that they have been unjustly treated in the workplace should contact the Ministry of Labour. Go onto our website. Because employees covered under the Employment Standards Act, 2000—an employer is obligated to meet the rights of the Employment Standards Act.

Also within the employment standards, though, I say to the member, an employer may terminate the employment services of an employee at any time, including the restructuring of a company, as long as the reasons for termination do not contravene the protections afforded an employee under the pregnancy and parental leave provisions of the act. So I say to the member and I say again to all Ontario workers, if they feel that they've been unjustly treated in the workplace—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'd like this minister to see his job restructured because he's pregnant.

Human rights workers have never seen so many firings of pregnant women—

Interruption.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just remind all of our guests that you're certainly welcome to observe but not participate in the debates. Thank you.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Human rights workers have never seen so many firings of pregnant women. One pregnant mom, Brandi Maher of Orillia, was laid off from her hotel housekeeping job. She now fears that she will have to go on welfare because her job won't be there for her. New mother Ilinka Petkovski was let go three days before she was to return to work. She gave up on the Ministry of Labour and the Ontario Human Rights Tribunal because their processes are too difficult to deal with.

Why won't this government enforce the Employment Standards Act to protect women and new mothers and ensure that this outrageous situation is shut down now and forever in Ontario?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: This government works very hard to ensure that all Ontario workers' rights are protected in this province. That's why we've actually modernized a great deal of the employment standards, the labour relations and the occupational health and safety in this province.

I say again to the member that there are safety nets in place to help with anybody who has been unjustly treated—through the human rights, through legal action

centres—to be able to help these workers. I also say to anybody who feels that their employer has contravened the Employment Standards Act, contact our ministry and one of our officers will be able to investigate.

RURAL AND NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The challenges facing rural and northern communities across Ontario are especially difficult and complex when it comes to health care, and this is very true in my own riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. In many cases, health care facilities are fewer and farther apart, with significant travel distances between locations. It becomes more difficult to recruit and retain health care providers, and our health care providers are asked to carry out a wider range of medical and emergency services in comparison to their urban counterparts. My constituents want to know how our government is going to address the serious concerns that they have about rural and northern communities and how health care will be addressed for them.

Hon. David Caplan: I want to thank the member for not only the question, but for her advocacy on behalf of rural and northern Ontarians, because our government is committed to providing quality health care for all Ontarians, regardless of where they live. I recognize the distinct challenges that rural and northern communities face, and I want you to know that our government is committed to examining these issues and providing a provincial framework to support northern and rural communities.

As part of the first stage, I'm very pleased to inform the member and this House that our government will establish a northern and rural health care panel to collate and review the current activities under way across the province. The panel will provide recommendations to identify unique needs. It will coordinate metrics and targets to be achieved by thorough strategic investments, and it will examine the existing programs, the supports that we have already put in place and the services targeted to northern and rural Ontario. I know this panel will help us to do the right thing for rural and northern Ontario residents, and I look forward to seeing its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member for Chatham–Kent–Essex.

Mr. Pat Hoy: I'm pleased to hear you will be implementing this northern and rural advisory panel to address the unique needs of both northern and rural communities.

I hear from my constituents that a number of hospitals across the province are facing budgetary pressures this year. This is a significant concern to my community, which is reliant on our hospitals to provide quality care and services. What are you doing to ensure that the hospitals have the resources they need to provide the best care and the care that our people deserve here in Ontario?

Hon. David Caplan: Well, I want to thank the member for the question. It's an excellent one.

We will continue to invest more into our hospitals and the health care sector overall, just as we have each and every single year that this government has been in office. Hospital funding in Ontario has increased from \$10.9 billion in 2003-04 to \$15.4 billion in 2009-10, and overall, a 37% increase because of the investments made by members on this side of the House. That includes a 2.1% increase in the overall base funding formula to meet the service requirements of hospitals.

I can tell you that our partners are very pleased with this investment. For example, Ron Gagnon, president and CEO of the Sault Area Hospital, says the 2.1% increase to base funding for the hospital is “very positive for us and for our patients.” We're also enhancing services outside of hospitals in creating 150 family health teams, and we're adding 50 more over the coming year, not to mention 25 additional—

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

1110

TRAVEL INDUSTRY

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: To the Minister of Consumer Services: Why did you, as minister, ignore a call at TICO's 2008 AGM for a public inquiry into the 2006 failure at One Step Travel and why, after seven of its 10 years in business, did One Step Travel continue to operate even when TICO knew it lacked sufficient working capital, particularly in three of those years when it was running on negative capital?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: Let me say this: In the event of a travel company's failure, the first priority of TICO and our government is to make sure that people get home safely, quickly and as fast as we can do that. I know some of the concerns were raised about how One Step's failure was handled by TICO at the last annual general meeting. In that annual general meeting and after that, the board of directors of TICO have decided to conduct a third party review. That third party review is now in progress. I look forward to the report of the third party review, and if any recommendations come out of it, I will look at them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: While One Step failed, three consecutive Liberal ministers took no steps to protect consumers. Despite industry and consumer warnings and demands for TICO and this minister to call a public inquiry into One Step and TICO, you ignored them. They asked you for meetings. They are here today. You refused to meet with them until now, of course, you've called an audit because your government is clearly embarrassed.

My question for the Minister of Consumers: Will the minister admit that had he met with the TICO task force, the travel agents and travel wholesalers who were elected to sit on a TICO task force, information about TICO's inactions and lack of diligence in the One Step matter could have prevented similar inaction in the Conquest case?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I want to welcome the member to this issue. This actually happened in 2006. Let me remind the member that TICO and the Travel Industry Act was, in fact, set by the previous Conservative government. I hope the member is not trying to suggest that we should not have helped the travellers when One Step failed and that we should not have brought them home. I hope she is not suggesting that. Our first priority is to get people home quickly, I already said that the third party review is currently under way. I look forward to their report, and if there are any recommendations that they make that we need to implement, we will look at them.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Today the TTC commissioners will formally approve a proposal by Bombardier to deliver 204 low-floor streetcars to the TTC for \$1.3 billion. This is good news and it means hundreds of new, good-paying jobs at Bombardier's Thunder Bay plant and its part suppliers throughout Ontario. The city has committed to paying its one-third share. Will the province announce today that it will be a partner and provide the one-third share to this vital, job-creating project?

Hon. George Smitherman: I do want to thank the Toronto member of the New Democratic Party for getting that caucus back in support of public transit. We were all so disappointed when they worked against the expansion of the York subway expansion past York University and into what your former leader referred to as the sparsely populated York region.

On the matter of streetcar purchases, we note Toronto's announcement on Friday. I think some people were surprised to note that there was not a funding source attached to it. I spoke with the mayor, and the city is certainly contemplating making an application through available infrastructure funds which would be, as an example, the stimulus funds that the governments of Ontario and Canada are participating in. As that has a deadline of May 1, and as the city has not made application, I couldn't comment further, but we're certainly interested in supporting the project. We have always been supportive of the work that Bombardier does in Thunder Bay.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: For me and us, there's real urgency in the matter. The Bombardier contract has a June 27 expiration date, and Toronto streetcar hopes will go off the rails if this funding isn't found by then. The question is, will the minister announce that the province will provide its one-third share to this vital, job-creating project?

Hon. George Smitherman: I must confess to being slightly confused. Is the honourable member suggesting that the announcement on Friday by the city of Toronto—that they were not in a position to actually be in contract for what they announced they were undertaking? As a Torontonians, I'm a bit surprised by that.

At the heart of it, like I say to the honourable member, we've demonstrated strongly our commitment to public transit. We're glad to see that Bombardier has been selected as the proposed proponent for the city of Toronto's work. There are mechanisms which come into play May 1, which is quite soon. As best I know from my conversation on Friday with the mayor, the city of Toronto is anticipating making an application for stimulus funds. We will wait for them to do that, but we look favourably on all opportunities to continue to support the emergence of public transit in the greater Toronto area, and we welcome that party's return to that level of support.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Mike Colle: A question for the Minister of Labour: Employees participating in the federal live-in caregiver program are among Ontario's most vulnerable workers. Many of my constituents, from all walks of life, have contacted my office in regard to the issue of social justice. Many hard-working caregivers are being exploited and are being charged thousands of dollars, which they are forced to pay through alternative illegal work if their contracts are cancelled. Minister, earlier this month you announced your ministry would introduce legislation to help protect vulnerable temporary foreign workers in Ontario. You also announced that you would provide resources for these workers to help them understand and protect their employment rights.

Minister, has there been any progress to date on any of these initiatives?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I would like to thank the member for the question and for his advocacy on this very important matter. The Ministry of Labour has, indeed, made progress on this front. I'm pleased to inform this House today that we have set up a toll-free hotline that went into effect this morning. It's now up and running to receive calls from participants in the federal live-in caregiver program. The hotline will provide information to these employees about their rights under the Employment Standards Act and will assist them in making claims if they believe that their employer is not providing them with their entitlements. The hotline will also be supported by a specially trained team to assist them in filing claims and link them to dedicated investigative officers.

This is just one of the initiatives that we have brought forward to date, and I'm pleased to say more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Mike Colle: Thank you for the response. Many caregivers will be glad to hear that our government is taking concrete action to help these vulnerable exploited workers. I'm sure that live-in caregivers across the province who are part of the federal program are also glad to know that this government is concerned about workplace rights. Employees participating in the federal live-in caregiver program are among Ontario's most vulnerable groups. They're subject to ongoing exploitation.

Minister, you mentioned that this helpline is not the only resource that your ministry is providing for these

workers. Can you tell us what other steps your ministry is taking to ensure that these caregivers are protected and supported in this most fragile state they are in?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: In addition to the toll-free hot-line, my ministry has also put together a fact sheet for live-in caregivers who are participants in the federal program. This fact sheet provides information on wages, hours of work, overtime pay and other rights under the Employment Standards Act. It has been posted on the Ministry of Labour website, and copies are being distributed to stakeholder groups and particularly community organizations that work with, help and represent live-in caregivers. In addition to community-based supports, we've also provided supports to participants in the federal live-in caregiver program. These services are available 24/7, 365 days a year, in 100 languages, for women who need information on matters as important as human rights, legal advice, housing, child welfare and health and—

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

1120

INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is for the Minister of Health. In light of the 2003 SARS outbreak that saw about 300 hospitalizations and 44 deaths, and now in light of the global swine flu outbreak, it's important that we reassure the public that steps have been taken. In the Office of the Auditor General's 2007 annual report, there was an indication that the ministry survey had found that over one third of the public health units had not completed their local pandemic plans. Could you confirm that those have now all been completed?

Hon. David Caplan: I have asked Dr. Williams and the officials in the public health division of the Ministry of Health to follow up to ensure that in fact pandemic plans are prepared. As the member would know, we have been in negotiation with the Public Health Agency of Canada on pandemic planning across Canada.

I did take the opportunity, for example—when Minister Aglukkaq was first appointed, she came to Ontario. The first conversation we had was about concluding pandemic preparedness and the responses. This is a very important part of the coordination of who is responsible for what and how communication protocols work to make sure that we're able to alert individual medical practitioners and able to alert the public as well.

I think the member asks a very good question. I hope I've been able to provide a very clear answer to it.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I think the answer I've received is that, no, not all of the public health units in the province have local plans, just as we don't have permanent medical officers of health.

My other question comes out of the same report. It indicated that the availability of sites where people could be isolated or quarantined for an extended time was limit-

ed, and it indicated the ministry had no plans to look for other sites for future outbreaks, despite what happened in 2003. I just wonder, Minister of Health, if you are currently looking for suitable alternative isolation sites.

Hon. David Caplan: Also a very good question, and that is part of pandemic planning. Communication has gone out to ensure—and in fact, that's exactly what happens under the protocol, whether it would be sites that would be identified, antiviral stockpiles that would need to be in place, the whole host of things. The first and most important thing is the ability to identify. The next, of course, is the ability to contain. That's where isolation comes in. Lastly, but equally important, is the ability to control and the ability to eradicate those infectious diseases. All three elements are critical to an appropriate pandemic response. All three have been in contact with the chief medical officer of health and, through him and through the offices of the public health department of the Ministry of Health, to individual public health units across the province and to practitioners.

I thank the member for the questions. Those are appropriate, given the circumstances. Ontarians would want to know that there are appropriate protocols, communications—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The member for Parkdale—High Park.

GO TRANSIT

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Over the past two months, GO's west Toronto diamond piledriving has subjected residents to an unacceptable, ear-splitting noise. By all accounts, residents have suffered from vibrations equivalent to earthquakes of a three to four magnitude on the Richter scale. After the piledriving, Metrolinx plans on running over 400 dirty diesel trains per day, instead of the 40 running currently, along these same tracks.

Minister, why are you willing to put the residents of Toronto through such torture?

Hon. James J. Bradley: It's an interesting way to describe it. May I say first of all, as I did previously in the House—and I've said this to Tony Ruprecht, the member for Davenport, to yourself and to the federal member Gerard Kennedy—this is indeed not a minor complaint for the people who reside in the area. It's a very genuine complaint. I have spoken to GO Transit about it. They recognize the concerns of the area residents. That is why they have begun meetings with affected neighbours in order to deal with each of the residents concerned. GO and its contractor are looking into a variety of technology designs and noise mitigation strategies. Different machinery, for example, is soon to be tested, and new sound mitigation strategies, including movable noise barriers, are being considered. GO, I am informed, is hopeful that it can improve the situation for area residents—

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Minister, GO has been consistently unwilling to meet with residents regarding the damage they are causing to citizens, and Metrolinx, as you know, should be using electric trains when this project is completed. We all want affordable, clean public transit, yet we cannot build that infrastructure while causing permanent harm to residents in Toronto.

Minister, mediation is not enough. Will the government commit to stopping this project immediately until residents' voices are heard?

Hon. James J. Bradley: The great difficulty is, as the member would know—and I appreciate that Mr. Ruprecht and yourself and Mr. Kennedy represent people affected by this; I appreciate that very much. It's a major challenge, however, to try to build public transit which your political party, our party and at times the Conservative Party have been in favour of over the years. I know that we're trying—at least GO Transit is—as much as possible to mitigate those concerns. They're keeping a community liaison on site all day, every day. There is regular communication with you, and we delivered notices to all residents explaining the construction. We held two full days of public information centres and we continue to actively look for ways to lessen the impact of noise on the community and try to schedule work during daytime hours and to follow the city of Toronto's noise bylaws. It is a very difficult situation; I understand that—

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

GREEN POWER GENERATION

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: My question is for the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure. As a member of the Standing Committee on General Government, I have heard many deputations from a wide variety of groups and individuals. During seven days of public hearings, travelling to Sault Ste. Marie, London and Ottawa, we heard from many groups and individuals, and they presented many thoughtful suggestions and amendments. Some of the issues raised by presenters as well as opposition members of the committee were related to mandatory home energy audits and the enforcement provisions. Given that the minister has spoken a number of times about looking forward to hearing how the bill can be improved, are you going to do anything to address these concerns that were raised through the hearings on audits?

Hon. George Smitherman: I want to thank the member from Huron-Bruce and, as I mentioned before, all the members of the committee for the hard work they did. We thank the committee chair and my parliamentary assistants, who both had a chance to participate. We've been listening carefully to the comments that have come in through the committee process and also on the EBR that the Ministry of the Environment has for views people offered about the way to improve the bill.

In two areas that I'd like to speak to, we are prepared to address concerns that have been raised. With respect to the mandatory nature of home energy audits, we have

moved forward with amendments that will allow buyers to opt out if the audit is not desired on their part. We've also proposed an amendment that would eliminate inspection and search powers related to home energy audits and the minimum energy efficiency standards for appliances and products. I would like to say that these are certainly in response to concerns that were raised by the official opposition as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Carol Mitchell: Minister, many people will appreciate your clarification on these two issues. This amendment will ensure that homebuyers are aware of the home's energy efficiency and how they could improve it while still providing some flexibility.

Ontarians have made hundreds of constructive suggestions to make the proposed Green Energy Act even more effective in creating a greener economy for Ontario. Some of the comments were related to concerns about community consultation, potential health effects and our commitment to domestic content.

Would the minister tell us if he will be proposing any amendments that will address these concerns that were raised?

Hon. George Smitherman: We've also brought forward amendments that will lower the grounds for appeal under the Environmental Protection Act to protect against serious harm. We'll be creating a new section that clearly establishes the obligation for community consultation. We've brought in a stronger section with respect to the government's commitment to domestic content. We've clarified the procurement directives under the new directive authority focused only on renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation, and that substantially addresses concerns from the NDP about that power being used related to nuclear. And we're enhancing the information documentation related to the development of conservation targets to ensure that it's transparent and publicly available so that the Office of the Environmental Commissioner has all that it needs.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Answer?

Hon. George Smitherman: Yes, Mr. Speaker. In response to the heckling by the honourable member, I say that we have listened and therefore we have made amendments which improve the Green Energy Act, and we look forward to the support of—

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

1130

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Next week is Children's Mental Health Week in Ontario. Thousands of Ontario families want to know if you are going to start providing the help that children with mental health problems need. More than 11,000 children are on a waiting list for help, and every day a child is on a list, he or she is becoming worse. Why do you let them sit on waiting lists, becoming worse and worse?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I can assure the member opposite that children's mental health is a very high priority for this government. I was very pleased that the Minister of Health has made mental health a priority, that he has brought children's mental health into the work that he is doing, and that there is a select committee of this Legislature looking at what we need to do to ensure that children do in fact get the support for mental health when they need it as close to home as possible. The ministry has been doing some very good work, and I'm sure in the supplementary I'll have an opportunity to talk about that.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I have asked you repeatedly in this House to provide the funding that is needed. The Auditor General has said that you are underfunding children's mental health. Your own roots of violence report recommended a funding increase. They say that it needed a \$200-million increase. Minister, why will you not help children receive the mental health funding they need?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We will of course note that this is in fact a spend question, that the opposition is advocating for a \$200-million increase in children's mental health.

What I do want to talk about are some of the changes that we are making as we speak. We have released a strategy document called A Shared Responsibility, and we are working to implement that strategy. The very first step, which we have now almost completed, is a mapping of the services currently available. What we have in children's mental health right now are a number of organizations that deliver some services. We need to understand what is there for children in the province right now before we begin to make the improvements all of us know need to be made.

Some of the very exciting and promising work that we are doing is with telepsychiatry, which is expanding access to children in remote locations and rural areas, where they are actually getting access to psychiatric help—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Last week, more than two dozen realtors working in Beaches–East York came to my constituency office to express their concerns over what they called this government's dreaded HST scheme. They asked me to ask you these two questions: Why is this government punishing homebuyers by making it even more expensive to purchase homes? And why is it shutting out taxpayers and realtors from expressing their displeasure by not having hearings?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We disagree with them. The one thing that we can do to help this economy grow is to lower the cost of our exports. We've also provided a very generous home tax credit that will benefit people across Ontario to effectively pay no single sales tax. Governments around the world have to respond. We have taken this course of action. We don't believe it's about this

interest group or that; we believe it's about what's best for all of Ontario. We think most people will see—

Interjections.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We think most people are prepared for a government that takes strong steps to ensure future growth in this economy, lowering the price of our exports, cutting personal taxes and corporate tax, which will actually, in our view, increase home sales once the Ontario economy deals with the world—

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

Mr. Michael Prue: Unfortunately for the people who live in the GTA, nearly half of all homes in the greater Toronto area that are being built today are valued at over \$400,000. This means that a huge number of future homebuyers will get whacked for higher taxes for everything from home costs to real estate fees to legal fees and title search costs, and this government will shut down debate so that the public's outcries cannot even be heard.

My question: Why won't this government allow a democratic debate on the budget bill so that Ontarians, and particularly realtors, can express their concerns and offer suggestions?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We are. I would remind the member opposite that it doesn't affect resale homes, and I would remind the member opposite that at \$400,000, it affects 75% of new home sales, and there's a proportional amount that goes to \$500,000.

That member and his party wanted to raise the provincial sales tax. Today, you're worried about rising costs for families with a single sales tax, but you wrote to us and requested the Premier to raise the PST by 1%, a \$2-billion tax hike.

The plan we've laid out will see most—

Mr. Howard Hampton: When was that?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Very recently, Mr. Speaker, under that member's signature.

I would remind those opposite that taxes for most Ontarians will be cut. This is the right plan that will help this economy recover once the world economy begins to—

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

SCHOOL BOARDS

Mr. Dave Levac: My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, as all of us know, recently there has been a governance review committee struck which made recommendations regarding the governance of our school boards. The committee was struck in the fall to consult with the education sector to discuss ways to modernize our governance.

I understand that the committee work has been submitted. We would like to know from the minister what process has led to the establishment of the committee, its work, and indeed its recommendations. If you could give us an idea of what kinds of recommendations have come from this committee to allow us the opportunity to

understand that we're moving into the 21st century in education, that in some of the changes we've made the governance has not applied to it, and now we're looking at ways that we can modernize that way of governance in the province of Ontario for public sectors.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you to the member for the question. As you will recall, more than 10 years ago there were some major changes made to school board governance in Ontario. Since that time, there have been a number of calls for a review of school board governance and clarification of roles.

What I did in October was I established a governance review committee and asked them to consult broadly and to report back, the point of this exercise being that we want to strengthen our school boards. We want to make sure that everyone understands how important they are as institutions in our local communities.

The recommendations have come back. There are 25 recommendations. The committee consulted across the province. It talked to trustees, directors of education, parent groups and representatives of 70 of the 72 school boards, so it's a very comprehensive review and recommendations.

At the core of the recommendations is the one that says school boards need to focus more on student achievement, so we'll be working—

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

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure to welcome today Mr. Trevor Taylor, director for business development of PCI Geomatics in my riding of Richmond Hill, in the east members' gallery.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I have as my guest today in the east gallery Councillor Mark Gerretsen, who also happens to be my son, from the city of Kingston. He's here together with his friend Holly Wilson, and Mauro Sepe.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MERVIN DEWASHA

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise today to acknowledge Mervin Dewasha from my riding of Dufferin-Caledon, who is one of only 14 people to receive the National Aboriginal Achievement Award in the field of technology and trades. Mr. Dewasha has been a long-time mentor for aboriginal youth entering the technology and trades fields. He's been leading the way for aboriginals across Canada for many years.

Only five years after graduating university, he was named the director of engineering for Indian and Northern Affairs in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Dewasha has always been active in his community. He was a proponent in developing health and safety standards for native reserves, he developed the first Indian housing building code, and he helped a First Nations community get their first-ever bank loan to build a school on a reserve.

Mr. Dewasha founded the Canadian Aboriginal Science and Engineering Association, a non-profit organization to increase opportunities for aboriginal youth to land careers in these fields. Mr. Dewasha and Neegan Burnside, located in Dufferin-Caledon, have completed approximately 1,200 projects for more than 200 First Nations communities across North America.

I am very proud to recognize Mervin Dewasha as a successful businessman, an accomplished aboriginal advocate, and now a national award winner.

SMOOTH ROCK FALLS HOSPITAL HÔPITAL DE SMOOTH ROCK FALLS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's with a certain amount of anticipation that I rise today in regard to the 60th anniversary of the hospital in Smooth Rock Falls. You'll know that communities across this province are struggling to maintain services within their communities when it comes to health care, with everything that's happening in the economy, and it's no different for the town of Smooth Rock Falls. They have lost their only employer there, making things rather difficult when it comes to being able to make sure the community has the type of employment it needs in order to make that city and that town as strong as possible.

One of the good-news items is that the hospital is there; it's still operating. We're now 60 years into operation of that hospital. It was started up by the Abitibi company that was there originally in order to run the pulp mill in Smooth Rock Falls. They made an investment, along with the community and the province, in order to start up the first hospital in Smooth Rock Falls, and since then we've been operating the hospital there for some now 60 years.

Le monde de Smooth Rock Falls a beaucoup de quoi être fier. On a vu beaucoup de progrès dans le système de santé dans la communauté de Smooth Rock Falls. On regarde cet hôpital, qui est différent d'autres dans le sens que dans l'hôpital lui-même, il y a des lits de soins de longue durée, une vingtaine de lits. Donc, c'est une cohabitation, une place pour les aînés, et, en même temps, il y a de la place pour être capable d'opérer cet hôpital dans cette communauté.

Mercredi soir à 6 heures, ils vont célébrer le 60^e anniversaire. Je veux leur souhaiter le bien, et j'espérerais être là, mais avec l'Assemblée qui siège mercredi soir, je ne pourrai pas. Je les félicite pour leur travail de 60 années.

PCI GEOMATICS

Mr. Reza Moridi: I rise here today to speak on a successful organization in my riding of Richmond Hill, PCI Geomatics. This company is a world-leading, innovative developer of image-centric software and solutions for geospatial imaging applications.

Last November, this company joined other Ontario-based innovative environmental technology companies in a trade delegation to China led by Premier McGuinty and Minister Chan. The successful mission resulted in \$600 million in contracts. The company signed an agreements with the National Geomatics Center Of China and the Chinese Center for Earth Observation and Digital Earth, focusing on environmental monitoring. Built on the success of last year's trip, PCI Geomatics has further extended its market share in China this year. It has also expanded its market share in Europe.

Ontario has a lot to offer to the world with our knowledge-based green economy and with our government-business partnership. Going green establishes international opportunities and creates jobs. In these challenging times, we need to be more aggressive than ever on the international stage.

I would also like to congratulate PCI Geomatics for their continued success in the international market and for creating world-renowned technology.

JOSEPH BRANT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I rise in the House today to inform the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister of Infrastructure that all of our citizens in Burlington—and those would include Conservatives, Liberals, as well as NDP in my riding—want to know what is happening with the proposal to update and expand our hospital. Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital is a community issue, not a partisan issue. I want to reinforce to both ministers the importance for us to work together on this community issue.

Yet another international epidemic, the swine flu, has reared its ugly head. I want to stress the importance of ensuring that all of our hospitals throughout Ontario have the ability to manage and contain communicable diseases.

Part of the capital build funding put forward by Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital is to ensure that they have state-of-the-art infectious disease control in their facility. One of the reasons cited in the Sault Ste. Marie hospital's coroner's report following their C. difficile outbreak was their aging infrastructure.

With the potential for yet another outbreak on the horizon, the citizens of Burlington deserve to be reassured that we will have a shovel in the ground in the near future. I am willing to work with this government on this critical issue. However, I also wish to serve notice that should another epidemic take place while we are challenged with aging infrastructure and outdated infection controls, your government will know that you had a

hand in the suffering of those victims. It is my hope we work together.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I rise today to speak on what the Ontario budget of 2009 means to Ontarians. This budget represents a commitment by the McGuinty government to make significant investments to help all sectors of the Ontario economy weather the economic storm and get the much-needed stimulus money into the economy. This will make our economy much more competitive.

The government has embarked on a bold measure to strengthen Ontario's economy by introducing tax reforms that will take effect on July 1, 2010. An efficient single tax system will reduce the cost to business. Reduced costs to businesses translate into benefits to consumers as reflected in lower prices as the inputs for businesses are not subject to provincial sales tax. The successes of such reform measures speak for themselves, as they have already been implemented in four Canadian provinces and about 130 countries around the world.

Mindful of some price increases, the McGuinty government has exempted items such as diapers, children's clothing, infant car seats and books. In addition, families with an income of less than \$160,000 will receive \$1,000. Those who earn \$80,000 or less will receive \$300. Some 93% of all Ontarians will benefit from permanent tax cuts. This budget includes \$10.6 billion over the next three years in tax cuts for Ontarians, including those targeted to seniors.

Here are some other benefits: an increase in the senior homeowners' property tax grant from \$250 to \$500 a year; a new refundable property tax credit for low- and middle-income earners; increased investment in health care and hospitals—\$13.2 billion more will be invested than before; a reduction in emergency room waiting times with a comprehensive \$360-million strategy.

In my riding of Scarborough Southwest, we are excited by the investment in infrastructure development that will see a revitalized and expanded transit system at Kennedy subway station connecting it to Pearson airport via Eglinton Avenue, as well as a brand new RT, rapid transit, system that will be built in an upcoming—

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

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TAXATION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm rising today to ask the government to reconsider the latest tax grab, the Dalton sales tax. This will hit people across the province with increases on items they use every day. Just look at the impact on farmers. In addition to paying 8% more on hundreds of items they need for their families, they are losing their point-of-sale exemption. This means that even on the items that are rebated, they will pay more

because they have to borrow the money until the government rebates it.

Then on Thursday, farmers got another hit. OMAFRA sent out information explaining that even farmland is going to be part of the tax grab. That means that farmland in Ontario will have a 13% sales tax. Imagine the young farmer who is just starting out, and doesn't even have a GST number yet, now having to pay 13% more to purchase farmland. Imagine the young people who have saved and borrowed everything they could to buy their dream farm, and now find that Dalton is going to charge them thousands upon thousands more. If you are selling your farm to your neighbour, he will be hit with the 13% Dalton sales tax whether he farms it or not.

At \$10,000 an acre, this will add an \$80,000 cost to a 100-acre farm. How can anyone believe this government supports new and young farmers when they add to the start-up cost like this?

I ask this government to do the right thing for farmers, seniors and families, and scrap the Dalton sales tax.

DAVID SACKETT

Ms. Sophia Aggelonitis: On March 31, it was announced that McMaster researcher and professor emeritus—and Hamiltonian—Dr. David Sackett will receive the Gairdner Wightman Award. This prestigious international award will be given to Dr. Sackett in recognition of his leadership in the fields of clinical epidemiology and evidence-based medicine.

The only Canadian-based researcher to receive this prize in 2009, Dr. Sackett joins a very influential group of international medical researchers. In fact, one in four recipients of this award has won the Nobel Prize.

For Hamilton, Dr. Sackett's award is of great significance. It is an example of the importance that medical research holds within our city, and the international recognition it has brought to McMaster, Hamilton and Hamiltonians.

Ultimately, Hamilton's successes are Ontario's successes. Hamilton's place as an international centre for medical research attracts investment and world-renowned scholars such as Dr. Sackett to our province.

People all over the world are better off for the work of Dr. Sackett, and we in Hamilton are very fortunate to have him at McMaster.

I'd like to thank Dr. Sackett for all of his great work and for coming to Hamilton.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I rise today to mark the 94th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. April 24, 1915, was the start of a planned and systematic campaign to eradicate the Armenian people by the Young Turk government of the Ottoman Empire, the last century's first case of ethnic cleansing. One and a half million Armenian men, women and children were brutally killed.

Some of the orphaned survivors of these massacres were settled on a farm in Georgetown, Ontario, in 1923 by the Armenian relief association with funds raised from ordinary Ontarians. These Georgetown Boys, as they became known, were pioneers of the thriving Ontario Armenian community, and their descendants continue to make positive contribution to Ontario's culture and economy.

In 1980, this Legislature, along with the National Assembly in Quebec and the British Columbia Legislature, recognized this tragic event. The House of Commons, the Senate of Canada and the government of Canada have all recognized this genocide as well.

Yesterday, many of our colleagues from this Legislature attended a commemoration of the first genocide of the last century at the Armenian Community Centre in Toronto. I urge you, and all of us, to commemorate this event with the Armenian community of Toronto.

I commend members from all sides of the House, past and present, for their leadership on this matter, and in particular, the member from Don Valley East, David Caplan; the member from Scarborough—Agincourt, Gerry Phillips; and the member from Scarborough Centre, Brad Duguid, who have been long-time advocates for this important issue.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Mr. Joe Dickson: I am proud and honoured to rise today in support of MS Awareness Month and the MS carnation campaign.

I thank all members who have shown their dedication here today to people affected by MS by wearing a carnation.

Today, volunteers from the MS society are at Queen's Park, meeting with MPPs from each political party to raise awareness of MS and the society.

It is known that women are diagnosed with MS three times more often as men. Many Canadians living with MS—multiple sclerosis—are mothers, and many others are adults and children who are affected by this disease. That's why, every year, the MS carnation campaign takes place over Mother's Day weekend.

For over 60 years, the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada has provided hope and help for people with MS across Canada through extensive national research. I had the pleasure of co-chairing the very successful Ajax-Pickering MS walk this past week with my federal counterpart, Mark Holland, and we all join the MS society in making every day better for people living with MS and in working to end MS.

REPORT, OMBUDSMAN OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the Ombudsman of Ontario's report entitled *Pirating Our Property: Investigation into the City of Oshawa's Apparent Failure to Co-operate*.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(b), the following change be made to the ballot list of private members' public business: Mr. Dickson and Mrs. Mitchell exchange places in order of precedence such that Mr. Dickson assumes ballot item 10 and Mrs. Mitchell assumes ballot item 13; and that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 10, 12, 13 and 15.

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

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

POLICE SERVICES

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I rise today, and it is my great pleasure, to pay tribute to two of my ministry's key partners in the critical job of keeping Ontarians safe. Today is Queen's Park Day for both the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police.

Permit me to inform the House that I just left a meeting with the incoming OACP president, Chief Dan Parkinson; outgoing OACP President Ian Davidson; Deputy OPP Commissioner Chris Lewis; and all the other chiefs and policing partners who are at this meeting. I will be going back to that meeting right after the statements and responses.

I would also like to recognize at this time the OAPSB president, Mary Smiley, who for 12 years has distinguished herself in her incredible individual contribution to the people of Ontario. We are proud to be hosting these organizations jointly for Queen's Park Day and I am proud to welcome them to Queen's Park.

Today, we recognize them for the important leadership role they play and thank them for their significant contributions to law enforcement in Ontario. Ontario is a safe place to live, due in large part to the work of the police chiefs and their partners, the police services boards. I want to thank them on behalf of the people of Ontario for the commitment they bring to the job.

Queen's Park days are a chance for legislators to engage with key partners in constructive dialogue, and it's through days like this one that we continue to build on partnerships that have proven to be strong and pro-

ductive over many, many years and many, many governments.

Both of these organizations are concerned about crime and the safety of Ontarians. So, too, is the McGuinty government. We are proud of the many initiatives that we have undertaken to advance that agenda and of the level of collaboration with these organizations that has helped accomplish our joint objectives.

The Ontario Association of Police Services Boards and the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police have welcomed the government's efforts to help them hire more police officers to keep our communities safe. Through our Safer Communities—1,000 Officers program, an additional 1,000 police officers have been working in Ontario communities since 2003. We have committed more than \$37 million per year in permanent funding to this particular program. Moreover, we have made funding permanent for a previous program for additional officers that was due to expire after five years. Together, both programs have delivered over 2,000 new police officers, with a total provincial funding commitment of \$68 million per year—and that's in perpetuity. In doing this, we have responded to the need expressed by our police partners.

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Recently, Premier McGuinty announced Ontario's participation in the federal government's police officers recruitment program. Ontario's share of that fund, \$156 million over five years, is woefully inadequate, and I think every member in the House agrees with this. The program announced by the federal government is a limited, five-year program that falls far short of the mark. However, we will make the best use of these limited funds while we continue, as a House, to lobby the federal government to provide full funding for Ontario's fair share of the number of officers promised.

We're also asking the federal government to make the funding permanent so that police services boards and their communities can continue to have the services of these additional officers after five years.

I welcome Queen's Park day as an opportunity for my colleagues in the Legislature to participate in important dialogue regarding issues such as this, and I appreciate this occasion to tell these valuable partners how much we value their work and to thank them for all they do to keep us safe. Our government will continue to work to ensure that our partnership with the OACP and the OAPSB continues to thrive.

NATIONAL VICTIMS OF CRIME AWARENESS WEEK

SEMAINE NATIONALE DE SENSIBILISATION AUX VICTIMES D'ACTES CRIMINELS

Hon. Christopher Bentley: It is a privilege for me to rise in the House today to mark National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, which runs from April 26 to

May 2 of this year. Throughout this week we honour the strength of victims who overcome great hardship to make important contributions to our province, and we restate our determination to do whatever we can and whatever we must to strengthen justice and reduce the harm in the first place.

Dans tout l'Ontario, des milliers de bénévoles et professionnels offrent leurs connaissances, leur soutien et leurs conseils aux victimes. Ils font preuve de compassion et de respect dans les services qu'ils rendent aux victimes quand elles en ont le plus besoin, que ce soit tout de suite après la perpétration de l'acte criminel, pendant les procédures judiciaires ou alors qu'elles s'efforcent de tourner la page.

Across Ontario, thousands of volunteers and professionals offer their knowledge, support, and advice to victims. They demonstrate compassion and respect, helping victims when help is needed most, whether in the immediate aftermath of crime, during the criminal justice process, or as they work to rebuild their lives. Many strive to raise the profile of victims' issues that so others may benefit from their efforts. We owe them a great debt of gratitude.

One of the ways we express our thanks for the efforts of victims, and the volunteers and service providers who support them, is through our Victim Services Awards of Distinction. Later this week we'll be calling for nominations for the third annual Victim Services Awards. These awards honour the dedication and creativity of professionals and volunteers who serve victims. They also celebrate victims who have courageously forged a better future for themselves, their families and their communities. The awards also help local victims' services agencies share best practices and learn from the successes of exemplary individuals and organizations. Anyone in Ontario can nominate any person or group in the province. The package of information about the program is being distributed today and I encourage every member of this House to participate.

We support victims of crime with the assistance they need from the moment of victimization, throughout court and related proceedings, and help them find a more hopeful future. We have continued to invest in the delivery of important programs that provide immediate relief to thousands of victims of crime across Ontario.

Often, victims tell us that in times of trauma, it is difficult to know where to turn for the specialized help they need. In order to provide easy-to-access information on local services, Ontario's Victim Services Secretariat has developed a new online directory of community victim services across the province. Information about community resources for victims is also available, in most languages spoken in Ontario, to anyone who calls our toll-free victim support line.

In the immediate aftermath of crime, volunteers from the government-funded victim crisis assistance and referral service provide on-site, immediate short-term help and support 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They provide exemplary support to victims under difficult cir-

cumstances. Last year, we increased the program's funding by \$1.8 million, bringing the total to \$9.4 million every year.

In 2007, we also introduced the victim quick response program. It continues to grow and helps more victims immediately after the incidents have occurred. Through this program, victims can receive emergency funding to help with child care, home repairs, housing and meals, transportation costs and professional trauma counselling. In cases of homicide, the program will help to alleviate the burden on grieving family members by covering some of their funeral costs.

Ontario's victim/witness assistance program, a front-line victim service fully staffed by government employees, offers support to people who are victims of the most serious crimes once charges are laid. It has been operating for more than 20 years. It continues to be rated by those it serves as highly successful, due in part to its track record of evolving and adapting to victims' needs. Last year, we increased funding to the victim/witness assistance program by \$2.9 million, bringing its total budget to \$19 million. Now we can connect with victims within 24 hours of an ask for an offer of assistance.

Our highly trained victim services staff work together with crown prosecutors, the police and others to help us serve and reach our goal of breaking the cycle of violence through our domestic violence court program. We are a national leader in this program, which delivers support to victims in specialized processes for domestic violence court cases in all 54 court jurisdictions.

Over the past year, we've expanded other services that are essential to helping victims of domestic violence rebuild their lives. For example, funding was doubled from fiscal 2007-08 to this year, to \$8 million, for the supervised access program, which facilitates child custody exchanges and visits where there is a safety concern. This program makes sure that court-ordered custody access visits can be done with the necessary level of safety.

We've also increased funding to SupportLink by 40%. SupportLink is a partnership among the Ministry of the Attorney General, Rogers Wireless and Ericsson Canada. It provides safety planning for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking. It also offers cell-phones that are pre-programmed to call 911 to help keep victims safe.

Through our child victim/witness program, we help to ensure support and services available to child victims and witnesses during their criminal court process, often to children who've witnessed domestic violence. Our government expanded this program last year and now provides \$1.3 million for eight of these specialized services across the province.

We work every day to help keep people from being victims of crime, but when they are, our province needs programs and services that hold offenders accountable for their actions. That's why we also increased funding for the partner assault response program last year. These counselling and education programs, known as PARs, are

directed primarily at offenders and are designed to help them learn better, non-abusive ways of relating to their partners.

We want to ensure that Ontarians have access to justice and to the supports and services that meet their needs and are culturally appropriate. We're all aware of the tragic overrepresentation of aboriginal people in our justice system. As part of Ontario's first aboriginal justice strategy, we're working to reduce the number of aboriginal justice victims and offenders in our system. The aboriginal community justice program is helping improve and increasing access to justice for aboriginal offenders by ensuring that proper cultural and healing supports are available to help reduce the risk of reoffending.

To assist aboriginal victims, we're helping communities develop practical projects that address the needs and priorities of victims, as defined by aboriginal communities, through a new grants program developed in our ministry and launched in August 2008. This program is a step toward improving services for aboriginal victims and communities through training, the development of best practices and by building community resources to meet their needs. We're working to build stronger relationships between government and among aboriginal communities—First Nations, Inuit, Metis communities and organizations—that will continue to grow long after the program has ended.

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Our commitment is clear. This year, we'll spend \$132 million on vital supports and services to better respond to victims' trauma and to help them rebuild their lives. This is in addition to the \$657 million our government has already invested to make our province a leader in victims' services, more than twice what any past government has contributed to victims' well-being. We'll continue to work at improving services for victims of crime, whether through continued funding, tried-and-true programs such as the victim/witness program, or finding new and innovative ways to help communities across Ontario share new skills and best practices.

As Ontarians, we all have a responsibility to learn about the issues that affect victims of crime and to help build stronger communities that offer the help and support they need.

I know that all members of the House will continue to support victims of crime and will honour the contributions they and those who work with them make across our province.

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Peter Kormos: On a point of order, Speaker: Standing order 35(c) is very, very clear. It's not optional. It's mandatory. We in this House need your assistance to ensure that ministers comply with standing order 35(c). If the page would please come and get the copy of the ministerial statement that was provided to opposition critics and leaders and leave that with the Clerk, please, and the Speaker would check that against the comments

made by the Minister of Correctional Services this afternoon, you'll find that there was failure to comply with 35(c). If you don't enforce it, rogue ministers, scofflaw ministers, are just going to run wild over the rules. We call upon you to ensure that our rights are protected.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Government House leader?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I appreciate that the member opposite has raised this concern with us directly, prior to making this intervention, and we will be taking it up with the ministers.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I thank the member from Welland and the government House leader for rising on the point of order.

I will say this to the government and to the ministers: We do need to ensure fairness to the members of the opposition who are going to be responding to those statements by ministries. Ministers should not ad lib any substantive changes to that written statement.

As Speaker—and I say this to the honourable members of the opposition—I do not receive copies of the written statements. I must, therefore, stand on the goodwill of the ministers as well. I would ask that we receive the co-operation of the ministers in sticking exactly to—as the Attorney General just did, I should note; it sounded like it, anyway—that prepared text, because that forms the basis for the response from the opposition. Thanks.

Responses?

POLICE SERVICES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'll be responding today to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and also to the Attorney General.

First of all I'd like to say, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, that I'm very pleased to welcome the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards here to Queen's Park. So far today, I've already had two meetings. I met with Deputy Commissioner Chris Lewis first thing this morning. I had lunch and met with Chief Paul Hamelin from the Midland Police Service. At 2 o'clock I'll be meeting with our leader, Mr. Runciman, and we'll be talking to around 30 chiefs of police about different issues they face within their jobs and what they're here lobbying for.

I'd also like to say that our party, the Progressive Conservative Party, has always been a close friend of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, and we like to listen carefully to their concerns and to the issues they face—and I know there are many of them today. I've got some briefing notes that our party has looked at—things like suspension without pay for officers who are involved in some serious crimes themselves. Crime prevention is a very strong priority for our party. In the last House, we had the Time for Action plan. We thought it was a very, very positive document that, as we move forward in the history of the province—we paid special attention to more serious crimes.

Funding for policing is always a big issue. There's no question that now, as we get into an economic downturn—we have the same problems that face social assistance and social services; the same thing applies—usually crime increases. The police services boards and the chiefs of police who are the administrators of those boards have a lot more responsibility, as crime increases, so they will be looking for that.

Of course we have some issues around special constables that the chiefs want to discuss as well, and they've got some good points. These are all points we can move forward with as a caucus.

I was about to thank the federal government for giving the Ontario government \$156 million for more police services, and was disappointed when the minister stood up and actually criticized the federal government for giving this money. He wanted more. I have to remind the minister, just in case he isn't aware of it, that policing is a provincial responsibility. This was a one-time gift from the federal government, and I think they should be appreciative. This government should be very appreciative of the billions and billions of extra dollars they have received from the federal Conservative government—Stephen Harper's boys—up in Ottawa. They've done an excellent job.

Interjections.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I didn't heckle them when they stood up—of course, the minister is over there. They can't take it; they can't take the truth. The fact of the matter is that the federal government has been very, very good to the Ontario government. Billions of dollars more have flowed to this government, and do you know what? You've wasted it just the same as you continue to waste no matter how much money you've got. I also want to stress the fact that policing in the province of Ontario is a provincial responsibility. That's the reality. So crying about federal money is really a cop-out, as far as I'm concerned—excuse the pun.

NATIONAL VICTIMS OF CRIME AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I want to take a minute to respond to the Attorney General and applaud the fact that April 26 to May 2 is National Victims of Crime Awareness Week. I'm very proud that it was a Progressive Conservative government, under the leadership of Mike Harris and the Attorney General at the time, Charles Harnick, that created the Victims' Bill of Rights, and we moved forward with that. Do you know what? We've been proud of that and we've been proud of our record with this.

We know, as we move forward, that there are still very, very serious crimes occurring out there. With the number of police available today, we know that the number of crimes is actually down but that serious crimes are up. I looked across the TV screen the other day and saw where one of the people charged with the shooting of Jane Creba—the Boxing Day murder—will be eligible

for parole in seven years. I think that type of thing is shameful in a province like Ontario.

I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words on this today and thank everyone. I hope everyone takes the fact that this is National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, and remembers those who have been victims of crime in this province.

POLICE SERVICES NATIONAL VICTIMS OF CRIME AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. Peter Kormos: I'm pleased, on behalf of New Democrats, to respond to both the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the Attorney General. We New Democrats are pleased to be talking with chiefs of police, along with members of police services boards, here at Queen's Park today. We understand some of the issues they propose to raise.

One of the matters they've brought to our attention, and will be bringing to our attention this afternoon, is that the most recent crime statistics, those for 2007, would give people the impression—and there's no reason to disbelieve them—that there has been a reduction in crime, that there has been a decline in most serious offences; that is, violent crimes. Well, that's little comfort to the person who gets shot on Yonge Street by a wayward bullet. Crime stats are of little comfort to the person who is the victim of a violent sexual attack.

The observation that there has been a decline in break-ins and motor vehicle theft is of little comfort to the senior citizen who comes home, after going to Bingo or a church banquet, and finds her house ransacked and is left with personal fear that will accompany her to her very deathbed. It's incredible how serious an intrusion that is on a person's life—a break and enter in and of itself—with the loss of intimate family mementos that can never be replaced.

The observation that there's been a decline in the youth crime rate is of little comfort to kids who are the victims of bullying, to women who get mugged and have their purses snatched from them or to people who find themselves victims of vandalism.

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But it's interesting that in their submission to MPPs this year, the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police—these are not bleeding-heart Liberals. These are tough cops, very experienced. In their submissions they note that Canada spends \$15 billion in reactive approaches to crime—\$10 billion of that is in policing itself—but spends less than \$100 million in crime prevention initiatives. These are chiefs of police talking, not bleeding-heart social workers, not tree-hugger types.

The chiefs of police suggested a mere 10% increase in that \$100 million spent on crime prevention would have a dramatic impact on crime prevention and would see a serious decrease in crime in high-risk communities; they suggest by as much as 50%. These are simple propositions like youth programs, job training programs, pro-

grams designed to retain kids, keep kids in high school until graduation.

New Democrats have been very aware of the critical failure of a succession of governments to respond to victims' rights. My colleague has the audacity to make reference to a Conservative Victims' Bill of Rights that the courts found in short order to be not worth the paper that it's written on, that it created no rights whatsoever.

And I tell you, nothing is more painful than to be victimized by a criminal and then revictimized by a court process that fails victims, by a court process that relies overly much on plea bargaining because of the heavy dockets that understaffed courtrooms have to deal with.

Nothing is more frustrating, I'm sure, for police officers who work hard, sometimes in dangerous circumstances, doing investigations, attending to the minute detail that the Charter of Rights and current law requires of them, than to find charges dropped because of a lack of courtroom access; to find charges dropped because Askov still looms like a cloud over almost every prosecution that's taking place here in the province of Ontario; and/or to see charges outright dismissed because the court had no choice but to stay charges because of the delays that are imposed by an overburdened system that's under-resourced and understaffed.

If you want to talk about crisis in policing, go up to Gilles Bisson's riding of Timmins–James Bay. Go to places like Peawanuck and Attawapiskat and look at how communities like those have to deal with crime and crime prevention—police officers who literally have snowmobiles without tracks on them. Of course, I don't have to underscore the tragedy at Kashechewan at that fatal fire, which is the subject matter of an inquest, that fatal fire that left police officers scrambling to find the keys to the cells while inmates were burning to death.

New Democrats are pleased to join our cops in Ontario in calling for them to have the tools and the resources they need to do their jobs safely and effectively. We're also pleased now to join them in calling for new investment in crime prevention programs, particularly focused on young people, so that we can, as chiefs of police indicate, reduce crime in those high-risk communities by 50%. That's money well spent.

JAMES SNOW

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in remembrance of the late James Snow.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It's an honour to stand in the House today and pay tribute to Jim Snow. I'm also pleased to say that his wife, Barb, his son James, his daughter Julie and his granddaughter Amy are with us today as well.

Jim was a friend but also a mentor to me and many of the people who sit around me in this House. In his incredible life, Jim gave so much to his community, to Ontario, to Canada, to his party and to his family.

Jim was not a small man, neither in stature nor in personality. It's no wonder he needed such a large frame to house his giant heart and to carry the weight of his immense sense of responsibility, for Jim tackled life with such purpose and compassion. He accomplished so much in one lifetime, he really had the strength of many men.

It was men like Jim who helped create the current nostalgia for the past that many Ontarians hold. We often look back with fond memories to those days when hard work, ambition, integrity and individual responsibility were the cornerstones of our prosperity. Of course, it is not that black and white. Critical study reveals that our past had its fair share of injustice, of greed, of poverty and of all the warts that we would rather not see. But the collective myths and the stereotypes of history exist for a reason. They exist not only because we want to forget the negatives, but because we want to celebrate the positives. They exist because of men like Jim Snow, who defined achievement, who found that perfect balance between private and public life, who rose to prominence without hurting anyone along the way—except, of course, for his political opponents. To accomplish so much while remaining generous, honest and virtuous—that is the definition of a life well lived. As a farmer, as a businessman, as a politician, a pilot, a philanthropist, a family man, a friend, a neighbour, Jim sought results and got them. I think that his greatest legacy is results for those he served.

As the Minister of Transportation especially, Jim set the bar high. I should point out that the James Snow Parkway, which was named during the period of time when Jim Snow was the Minister of Transportation, is a regional road, and it was named for Jim in honour of his service to Ontario. It was somewhat controversial at the time, people wondering how the Minister of Transportation could have a road named after him and signed as such on the 401.

Jim set the bar high. In nine years he helped build so many of those roads, railways, airports and bridges that were essential for economic success. He even rode his motorcycle all over those highways to make sure they were in good shape. He was really involved in those projects. He wasn't just the figurehead of that very important ministry, the Ministry of Transportation, but he would actually sit down with the designers, the engineers, the planners and all levels of bureaucracy to make sure the projects were perfect. It has been said that Jim was perhaps the last Minister of Transportation to actually run the ministry—although he had a great asset in Howard Gilbert, his deputy minister. In that sense, Jim was so much more than a politician during his time at Queen's Park. He was a true servant of the people of Ontario and an example for all current and future members of this Legislature.

He also serves as an example in the way that he conducted himself in this chamber and in the media. Jim was not one to mince words. He avoided the manipulation and wordplay that is all too common in politics these days. He said what he meant and he meant what he said.

Sometimes his frankness was offensive to those on the receiving end, but he always chose truth over deceit, honesty over expediency. In this regard, we all should take note and strive to do better.

Beyond his day-to-day work as minister, Jim was one of the best representatives this province ever had. He cared so deeply for all of his constituents, despite any political affiliations or critical perspectives. Often the very demanding work of ministers keeps them from their constituencies, but not so with Jim. I was one of those constituents back when I would call his office from time to time needing information, and every time, Jim would call me back personally the same day. All members of the House know how impressive that is. These days we get so many e-mails that we often need a day or two and the help of our many staff to keep up. But even back then, Jim was one of a kind when it came to true democratic representation.

To make up for his time away from the office, he gave out his home phone number so he could stay in touch with the people in his riding. That made his wife, Barb, a de facto volunteer constituency assistant, but I'm sure she didn't mind too much, for Barb, like Jim, is the epitome of selflessness and determination.

Applause.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Like Jim, she cares deeply for her community, and the people of Halton owe her many thanks indeed. It was often said at election time that you had to vote for Jim because you wanted Barb to continue her role in the constituency.

After his long political career, Jim returned to private life and succeeded there as much as he did here. In his final years, he gave back so much to the land that gave him life, including a 2006 donation of \$500,000 to the Milton hospital for a CT scanner, and a gift of his own home and farm to the Salvation Army. These acts of goodness truly reveal the vast generosity and compassion that Jim held in his wonderful heart.

In closing, I would like to speak to Jim's best accomplishments: his family. All of the current and past members of the PC Party who knew Jim got a taste of what family meant to this man. He treated our party like extended family, always ready to host, to give advice and lend a helping hand. To you, his family, I say thank you. Thank you for letting us all, the whole province, share your husband, your father and your grandfather. Thank you for helping shape Jim into the great man he became. Thank you for taking constituency calls late into the night. But, most of all, thank you for supporting him, and in turn supporting us, where we are richer because of him now and forever. Thank you.

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Mr. Rosario Marchese: I rise on behalf of the Ontario New Democratic Party to pay tribute to James Snow and to welcome the members of the Snow family who are here with us today, as we celebrate the contributions of a man who believed in his community.

Although James Snow and New Democrats approached issues from different perspectives, we all hold

in common the many personal sacrifices that have to be made in order to serve the people in our ridings.

It is fitting that his family is here today as we pay tribute to his legacy, as they are owed a debt of gratitude for their willingness to share him with the people of Ontario. For many, the sacrifices made by family often go unnoticed and unreported; however, for those of us who have the privilege of sitting in these benches, we all know too well the value of this foundation and the key role that our loved ones play in our efforts to serve the public to the best of our ability.

To Barbara and the rest of the Snow family, we thank you for the role that you played in building a stronger Ontario, and we are aware that James's successes would have been diminished by the absence of your support.

James Snow's contributions to Halton region include Halton Regional Road 4—later renamed James Snow Parkway in his honour, as mentioned by the member from Halton—and serve as a testament to his belief that the needs of his constituents were his priority as the MPP. He believed in the people and the potential of the communities he had the honour of serving, and demonstrated that in this House and at the cabinet table.

As a lifelong resident of Halton region, James Snow always made the effort to remain accessible to those who sent him to Queen's Park, even meeting with constituents in his home while serving as Ontario's transportation minister.

James Snow's commitment to Halton did not end with retirement from political life. He continued to lead by example, making incredible contributions to local charitable causes.

James Snow led a full life at Queen's Park, but more importantly, he never lost sight of the community and the people he came here to represent. We celebrate his contributions to Halton and to Ontario. Thank you.

Hon. James J. Bradley: On behalf of the government, the Liberal Party, I'd like to pay tribute to Jim Snow this afternoon.

I look at the boardroom wall and I see photographs of different ministers—my friend Norm Sterling is on the wall, as well, and he would have looked at the photographs. One of the most imposing, and more than simply the picture itself but of the memories, is the photograph of Jim Snow, who for almost 10 years was the Minister of Transportation. Most of us do not last that long in any specific portfolio. There are various reasons one gets moved from them. Sometimes it's with the help of the electorate and sometimes it's because of other reasons. The very fact that Premier Davis kept Jim Snow on as Minister of Transportation and Communications, as it was known then, is because he was highly effective.

I was impressed, in going back in some of the memories of Jim, to note that he had actually started Snow Construction at the age of 19. Most people are out having a good time when they're 19, and perhaps he was as well, but he had time to set up a construction company and, of course, to run the family farm.

Those of us who served with him—Norm Sterling and I did, and probably Bob Runciman and Tony Ruprecht

did as well—will remember, and I saw a note in here that said he was sometimes vociferous. I would like to correct that: He was always vociferous. He was always prepared to express his views. He was very blunt. There was none of the doublespeak, as the member from Halton said. What he said he meant, and he didn't care what they said when he got outside into the media scrum. Jim Snow said what he thought, and he said that to his colleagues as well.

He was not a fan, it's safe to say, of the Environmental Assessment Act, as it restricted—I must tell the Minister of the Environment—his ability to undertake construction in the province of Ontario. I remember recalling to him the situation with the Burlington Skyway, the James Allan Skyway, as it is called, and he was lamenting how long it was taking to build it because of the environmental assessment process. While he believed in protecting the environment, he was a man of action and wanted to see those works undertaken.

I understand that there were some good parties at the farm. I didn't get any invitations, or if I did I was afraid to go because there were so many Conservatives there, but it was apparently a great time. He extended that hand of warmth and hospitality to all.

The member for Halton was correct in saying that when you had a question for him on a personal basis, he was prepared to get back to you quickly.

We are now insulated, some would say—some would say “served”—by constituency offices. From 1971 to 1975, you wouldn't have seen constituency offices; they were something that came along later. So Barb and the family and others, and Jim, would have to take those calls at home with individual constituent concerns, keeping in mind that he was also a cabinet minister with a very significant portfolio in that day.

He was a very friendly fellow, as we recall, with a booming laugh. He always had a good joke to tell to colleagues, and we enjoyed him very much.

He was re-elected every time. He got elected, I notice, by 164 votes—a landslide—when he started out. But what was important was that no matter how well the government was doing at the polls, Jim Snow was elected with comfortable pluralities in his constituency, and that is a clear indication that people were satisfied with his service.

John Tory, the former leader of the Conservative Party, described him as a man larger than life. John saw him from two points of view. He was a friend, of course, but John, you'll remember, worked—I don't like to use the word “backrooms”—in the backrooms of the government at that time as an assistant to Bill Davis. He would see, on that basis, the kind of influence that Jim Snow had. I suspect that he wouldn't have been as understanding of unelected officials who advise ministers and Premiers as perhaps some of us are today, and I guess that speaks well for him.

Thank you very much for sharing him with us, because it is a matter of sharing a person with the province of Ontario. Jim could have been successful in a thousand different areas; he had that kind of personality and

enthusiasm. He chose to be in the public sector for a significant period of time, approximately 18 years, which meant that the province of Ontario benefited immensely from that.

I was amazed as well: He was a pilot. I've always been amazed by people who are pilots. Now I've heard that he rode a motorcycle as well. He was a man who was fearless in that regard, and that is something that we should applaud enthusiastically.

The last thing I want to mention is his contribution to community. I was impressed, as others were, by the contribution of some half a million dollars to the Milton District Hospital for the CT scanner. As we know, hospital equipment is not something that is publicly financed. It is something for which fundraising takes place. When someone makes a donation of half a million dollars toward such an instrument, it's a catalyst for others to contribute as well. And of course, providing the farm to the Salvation Army was yet another good example of his generosity to the people of the community.

Lastly, I want to compliment him for being a member of the United Church of Canada, something he and I share. I know that he had dedication to his church as well.

So, while we have lost him—he died at the age of 79, which today is too early; for Jim, it would be too early at any time—the one thing that can't be taken away from those of us in this House and his community is the many memories that he left with us, and the accomplishments that were part of the progress of the province of Ontario.

So to the family, we express our condolences but also our thanks to you for sharing with us a man who was larger than life: our friend, Jim Snow.

Applause.

1400

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd ask all member and guests to join me as we mark a moment of silence in tribute to former member James Snow.

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. I thank the honourable members for their participation in the tribute.

To Mrs. Snow and to your family, I'll ensure that copies of the Hansard are provided to you as a permanent record of today's tribute to your husband and your father and your grandfather.

PETITIONS

PENSION PLANS

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontarians are currently denied full discretionary access to their locked-in retirement accounts; and

“Whereas the monies within these locked-in accounts have already been earned as deferred salary, i.e., they are not government handouts or bailouts; and

“Whereas Ontario pensioners have already demonstrated throughout life that they are quite capable of prudent financial management, given that they have raised families, bought and sold homes and automobiles, managed investments, paid their taxes, operated businesses, among other successes; and

“Whereas similar legislation passed in Saskatchewan in 2002 has been successful and has demonstrated the wisdom and prudence of retirees; and

“Whereas a quick and immediate unlocking of pension funds would act as a significant and timely stimulus to the economy during the current recession;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support into law the private member’s bill recently tabled by Mr. Ted Chudleigh, MPP Halton, allowing all Ontario pensioners, at age 55, full discretionary access to all monies accrued within their locked-in retirement accounts.”

I’m pleased to sign this and pass it to my page, Cameron T.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition signed by a great number of my constituents, and it’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, has publicly stated that she ‘absolutely’ wants to help the beginning and new entrants to agriculture; and

“Whereas beginning and expanding farmers are going to be important in the coming decade, as a record number of producers are expected to leave the industry; and

“Whereas the safety net payments—i.e., Ontario cattle, hog and horticulture payments (OCHHP)—are based on historical averages, and many beginning and expanding farmers were not in business or just starting up in the period so named and thus do not have reflective historic allowable net sales; and

“Whereas beginning and expanding producers are likely at the greatest risk of being financially disadvantaged by poor market conditions and are being forced to exit agriculture because there is not a satisfactory safety net program or payment that meets their needs;

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

“To immediately adjust the safety net payments made via the OCHHP to include beginning and expanding farmers, and make a relief payment to the beginning and expanding farmers who have been missed or received seriously disproportionate payments, thereby preventing beginning farmers from exiting the agriculture sector.”

As I agree with this petition, I affix my signature.

TAXATION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas residents in Dufferin-Caledon do not want a provincial harmonized sales tax (HST) that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, and will be applied to house sales over \$400,000; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for meals under \$4, haircuts, funeral services, gym memberships, newspapers, and lawyer and accountant fees; and

“Whereas the blended sales tax ... will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

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

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers.”

I’m proud to affix my signature to it and give it to page Kenzie.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition here from Sister Ditma in support of the caregivers.

“Whereas a number of ... caregiver recruitment agencies have exploited vulnerable foreign workers; and

“Whereas” caregivers “are subject to illegal fees and abuse at the hands of some of these unscrupulous recruiters; and

“Whereas the federal government in Ottawa has failed to protect foreign” caregivers “from these abuses; and

“Whereas, in Ontario, the former Conservative government deregulated and eliminated protection for” caregivers; and

“Whereas a great number of ... caregivers perform outstanding and difficult tasks on a daily basis in their work, with limited protection;

“We, the undersigned, support ... the Caregiver and Foreign Worker Recruitment ... Act, 2009, and urge its speedy passage into law.”

I support Sister Ditma and the caregivers, and I affix my name to this petition.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a petition from my riding of Durham, and as a reminder to the member from Scarborough Southwest, who had a member’s statement this morning, this is in response to that. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the proposed harmonization of the Ontario retail sales tax (RST) with the federal GST has the potential to increase costs to many small businesses and their customers; and

“Whereas these added costs would have a devastating impact in difficult economic times; and

“Organizations such as the Ontario Home Builders’ Association have estimated that harmonization would add \$15,000 in taxes to the price of a new Ontario home.

“Therefore we, the undersigned, reject the harmonization of GST and RST unless there are exemptions to offset the adverse impacts of harmonization so that the outcome will be a reduction in red tape, not higher taxes.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham.

BRANTFORD SENIORS RESOURCE CENTRE

Mr. Dave Levac: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Brantford Seniors Resource Centre Inc. has had over 3,700 contacts in its first 11 months of operation; and

“Whereas it has distributed over 7,000 pieces of agency and government information; and

“Whereas this volunteer organization has helped seniors from Hamilton, Woodstock, Cathcart, Simcoe, Brantford, Brant county and Six Nations fill out government forms;

“We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to fund this valuable community asset in the amount of \$25,000.”

I sign this petition with my support.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a petition to do with the new McGuinty sales tax and it reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the McGuinty government is planning to merge the 8% provincial sales tax and the 5% federal sales tax; and

“Whereas the new 13% harmonized sales tax will be applied to products not previously subject to provincial sales tax such as gasoline, home heating fuels, home renovations, haircuts, hamburgers, television service, Internet service, telephone and cell services, taxi fees, bus, train and airplane tickets, and dry cleaning services; and

“Whereas rural and northern Ontarians will be particularly hard hit by the harmonized sales tax, as will seniors and families;

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

“That the McGuinty government should remove this harmonized sales tax from its 2009-10 budget.”

I give this to Michael.

FIREARMS CONTROL

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition here from the good people in the riding of Davenport, Jack Fava and the local police unit.

“Stop unlawful firearms in vehicles.

“Whereas innocent people are being victimized by the growing number of unlawful firearms in our communities; and

“Whereas police officers” and “military personnel ... are the only people allowed to possess firearms; and

“Whereas a growing number of” illegal guns “are transported, smuggled and found in” cars; and

“Whereas impounding” cars “and suspending driver’s licences of persons possessing” illegal guns “in motor vehicles would” help “the police in their efforts to make our streets safer;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass Bill 56, entitled the Unlawful Firearms in Vehicles Act, 2008, into law, so that we can reduce the number of” gun crimes “in our communities.”

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. John O’Toole: I have another petition from the riding of Durham, which reads as follows:

“Whereas the municipality of Clarington passed resolution C-049-09 in support of Lakeridge Health Bowmanville; and

“Whereas area doctors, hospital staff and citizens have raised concerns that Bowmanville’s hospital could turn into little more than a site to stabilize and transfer patients for treatment outside the municipality; and

“Whereas Clarington is a growing community of over 80,000” people; and

“Whereas we support the continuation of the Lakeridge Bowmanville site through access to on-site services, including emergency room, internal medicine and general surgery;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, request that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the McGuinty government take the necessary actions to fund” all “hospitals equally” and equitably. “And furthermore, we request that the clinical services plan of the Central East LHIN address the need for the Bowmanville hospital to continue to offer a complete range of services appropriate for the growing community of Clarington.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this petition on behalf of my constituents.

1410

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Mike Colle: I have a petition from hundreds of people in Mississauga and Brampton in support of protecting vulnerable caregivers.

“Whereas a number of ... caregiver recruitment agencies have exploited vulnerable” caregivers; and

“Whereas” caregivers “are subject to illegal fees and abuse at the hands of some of these unscrupulous recruiters; and

“Whereas the federal government in Ottawa has failed to protect foreign” caregivers “from these abuses; and

“Whereas, in Ontario, the former Conservative government deregulated and eliminated protection for” caregivers; and

“Whereas a great number of ... caregivers perform outstanding and difficult tasks on a daily basis in their work, with limited protection;

“We, the undersigned, support ... the Caregiver and Foreign Worker Recruitment ... Act, 2009, and urge its speedy passage into law.”

I support the good people in Mississauga and the protection of caregivers and I affix to my name to this.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. John O’Toole: Again, another petition from the riding of Durham, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the recently passed Bill 41 with regard to speed limiters on heavy trucks was passed without considering the effect on traffic flow, safety concerns and interstate trucking; and

“Whereas the speed of 105 kilometres per hour creates a dangerous situation on our 400-series highways with consideration to the average speed of traffic flow being 120 kilometres per hour;

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

“That the Legislature suspend enforcement of the speed limiter law until the Legislature can review all studies conducted pertaining to the effect of this law and road safety concerns; and

“That the Ontario speed limiter law be amended from 105 kilometres per hour to 120 kilometres per hour to remove the increased risk of collisions on our highways and to prevent infringement on interstate trucking out of province and country.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this petition on behalf of the economy of Ontario.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I have a petition. It’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and reads as follows:

“Whereas the McGuinty government understands the present-day economic realities facing Ontario;

“Whereas the 2009 Ontario budget reflects the need to create and maintain jobs by proposing to spend \$32.5 billion in the next two years to build more public transit and improve existing infrastructure, all the while supporting and creating 300,000 jobs;

“Whereas workers are further being helped by additional job opportunities created in the green energy sector via the Green Energy and Green Economy Act that will, if passed, create 50,000 new jobs in the first three years of its existence;

“Whereas Ontarians who work hard each and every day to make ends meet will receive much-needed income tax relief in the form of a 17% tax cut to the tax rate in

Ontario’s lowest tax bracket from the current 6.05% to 5.05%;

“Whereas Ontario’s future, represented by her children, will receive the Ontario child benefit two full years ahead of schedule, amounting to \$1,100 per eligible child;

“We, the undersigned, therefore applaud the McGuinty government for introducing a budget that protects all Ontarians during these very difficult economic times by investing in our greatest resource—our people.”

I agree with this petition, give a copy to Kenzie and affix my signature to it.

PENSION PLANS

Mr. John O’Toole: Another petition. These are all different, they’re all unique, and they’re all from constituents in the riding of Durham. This one reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas General Motors has contributed significantly to the Ontario and local economies and was a significant contributor to the pension benefits guarantee fund (PBGF); and

“Whereas the General Motors of Canada salaried pension plan fund (plan 0340950) is severely underfunded due to the government’s lack of responsibility in allowing policies (regulation 5.1, ‘too big to fail’ legislation) which permitted GM to underfund the pension benefits guarantee fund; and

“Whereas GM is experiencing severe financial problems and there is a potential for bankruptcy;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, support the GenMo salaried pension organization in petitioning the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour its commitment to totally fund the pension benefits guarantee fund; and

“That, in any approved restructuring plan of General Motors of Canada, provision be made to ensure that GM fully funds pension plan 0340950 and continues to provide lifetime benefits to retirees and surviving spouses in accordance with its retirement commitments; and

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario take immediate action to protect the pensions of GM retirees.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this in support of my constituents.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Mike Colle: I’ve got a much more appropriate, short petition here, collected by Valentina Karapici, who’s an incredible volunteer in my riding.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas a number of foreign worker and caregiver recruitment agencies have exploited vulnerable foreign workers; and

“Whereas foreign” caregivers “are subject to illegal fees and abuse at the hands of some of these unscrupulous recruiters; and

“Whereas the federal government in Ottawa has failed to protect” caregivers “from these abuses; and

“Whereas, in Ontario, the former Conservative government deregulated and eliminated protection for” caregivers; “and

“Whereas a great number of” caregivers “perform outstanding and difficult tasks on a daily basis in their work, with limited protection;

“We, the undersigned, support ... the Caregiver and Foreign Worker Recruitment and Protection Act, 2009, and urge its speedy passage into law.”

I support Valentina Karapici and the caregivers and I affix my name to this fine petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TOXICS REDUCTION ACT, 2009 LOI DE 2009 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES TOXIQUES

Mr. Gerretsen moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 167, An Act to promote reductions in the use and creation of toxic substances and to amend other Acts / Projet de loi 167, Loi visant à promouvoir une réduction de l'utilisation et de la création de substances toxiques et à modifier d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'm pleased to begin second reading debate on the government's proposed Toxics Reduction Act. But before doing that, we might just review some of the actions that this government has taken over the last five years since we came into government in 2003. Since that time, we have passed a Clean Water Act and a Source Water Protection Act. You may recall that that act is an effort by the 19 or so source water protection committees around this province to clearly plan and identify the sources of fresh water, particularly for municipal drinking water systems. Whether that water is groundwater, surface water, or river, stream or lake water, they're doing excellent work to make sure that the sources of our water are protected.

We've also, since that time, hired 30 more drinking water inspectors to make sure that the water we drink is as clean as it can possibly be and be safe for all of us who drink it from time to time.

We also passed a Safeguarding and Sustaining Ontario's Water Act. That act virtually bans diversions from the Great Lakes and brings in water charges for industry for the first time. As time goes along, we will be improving that act as well.

You may recall that just last year we passed the Lake Simcoe Protection Act to make sure that Lake Simcoe, which is a body of water just north of the GTA that's under stress right now, will be there for many, many generations to come as a place where people can have recreational activities take place, where the deep water

fishery will once again flourish as it has in days gone by. We're right now in the process of developing a plan to protect Lake Simcoe and the streams and rivers that flow into Lake Simcoe, some 23 of them, so that we can protect that in the future. That's the kind of work that we're doing right now, and that plan will come out in the near future.

We also, in the area of environmental legislation, passed a bill which is called the “You spill, you pay” legislation, which is one of the toughest anti-pollution laws in North America. That wasn't the case before. That's all happened in the last five years.

Just a couple of weeks ago—as a matter of fact, on April 22; I guess it was last week—the law banning the cosmetic use of pesticides came into effect, and not only the use of pesticides on our lawns and yards and playgrounds and parks but also the sale of pesticide material in the province of Ontario that is strictly used for cosmetic purposes. I can tell you that the overwhelming majority of Ontarians support this, and certainly from the e-mails, letters and the comments that I've received, this has been extremely well received. It's been supported by organizations such as the nurses' association and the medical association in the province of Ontario. It's been supported by environmental groups, by the David Suzuki Foundation, Environmental Defence—I could go on and on. Some people have worked tirelessly on bringing that province-wide law into existence for over 20 years.

1420

Just recently, as well, we greatly increased our number of waste diversion programs. You may recall a while ago that we brought forward the new household hazardous waste program, whereby the number of collection places and depots around this province have been substantially increased—and we want to increase that fivefold in the years to come to the number that are out there right now—to make sure that all those hazardous toxic materials that we have within our households, one way or another, are no longer disposed of either in our water streams, in being flushed down the toilet, as it were, or no longer end up in our landfill sites. That material should be properly disposed of, it should be put into new substances and new materials, but it should not end up in either landfill sites or in our water streams.

Just a little while ago we came out with a new program with respect to electronic and electrical waste and the proper disposal of that. There are some companies that are doing some excellent work in the province of Ontario, where they literally take old computers, televisions, monitors, keyboards etc. and take them apart piece by piece so that every bit of the substances that create these different instruments can once again be utilized in new product. Of course, the hazardous materials that are contained—the lead and mercury in each one of these electronic devices—will also no longer be deposited in our landfill sites.

Also, we will be coming out very soon with a tire recycling program. Many people know that there are over six million to seven million tires across the province of

Ontario—which have been dumped illegally, in a lot of cases, that are on properties, particularly in rural areas, and some on aboriginal lands—that are basically a health hazard to individuals. Our new tire recycling program will make sure that not only the 12 million or so tires that are being replaced on an annual basis in the province of Ontario are dealt with in an environmentally sound recycling fashion, but also the stockpiles of the old tires will be dealt with as well.

All of these various laws, when it comes to waste diversion activities, are based on the principle of extended producer responsibility. That basically means that ultimately those who produce the material should be responsible for its proper disposition, in one way or another, in new product, once the life cycle of that product is over and done with.

The question of air quality: Since we took over as government in 2003, we have put into place 59 new and updated air quality standards. We also tabled last year the first annual climate change report, which basically shows that we're on track.

Of course, the defining issue, I suppose—not only within the environmental community, but the defining issue of our time—is the one relating to climate change, where we as a society, not only here in Ontario, in North America and in Canada but throughout the world, simply have to lower those greenhouse gas emissions. Because the science is in: If we don't do something about it, the world that we know today simply will not be here for our children and grandchildren to enjoy 50 or 60 years from now.

We've heard about the disappearance of the ice caps, both in the north and the south pole. It may very well happen that whole islands may disappear in the South Pacific. So we're working on the climate change plan by building more transit in the province of Ontario; over \$50 billion will be spent on more transit to take cars off the road. We're also working with, for example, the province of Quebec to come up with a cap-and-trade system, and we're working very closely with the Western Climate Initiative as well. It's all intended for only one purpose, and that is to reduce those greenhouse gas emissions. So a lot of progress has been made, but as you and I know, a lot more work needs to be done if we want to make sure that our environment is not only enhanced but is better than it is today.

It's with that in mind that we are adding another piece to the puzzle, as it were, to deal with the environmental situation that confronts us on a day-to-day basis with the second reading debate that's starting today with respect to our government's proposed Toxics Reduction Act. This is very important legislation because it would provide numerous environmental and health benefits to our province and, of course, most importantly, to the citizens of this province. At its very core, it would reduce toxic substances in our air, water, land and consumer products. It would help protect Ontarians from potentially harmful effects of toxics to their health, whether in their home, their workplace or their community, and it would result

in making our environment cleaner, safer and healthier, a goal which I'm sure all of us in this Legislature share.

But it would do more than that. If this bill is passed, it would also stir innovation, create jobs and investment, and further boost Ontario's green economy, which offers such great potential for our future.

There are more than 23,000 chemicals in commercial use in Canada—23,000 different chemicals. More than 100 new chemicals are introduced to the Canadian marketplace each and every year. Unfortunately, Ontario is currently responsible for the highest releases of toxics in the country, and it's among the highest-releasing jurisdictions in North America. That simply isn't good enough. It isn't good enough for our children, it isn't good enough for us, and it isn't good enough for this government. That's why, in the last election, Premier Dalton McGuinty promised the people of Ontario that we would introduce toxics reduction legislation.

Interjection.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'm sure the member from Durham would totally agree with this bill and that he will support it once second reading debate is over and done with. The strategy is all about better protecting human health and the environment while supporting the transformation of businesses in Ontario to a new green economy.

I want to once again recognize Ontario's Toxics Reduction Scientific Expert Panel, which provided with us with such valuable advice in this area over the past year. Its co-chairs, Dr. Miriam Diamond and Professor Lynda Collins, both stated that the proposed legislation, if passed, will mark a major step forward for health protection, the environment, and as a move toward a greener economy. Professor Collins calls it "21st century environmental regulation" that is an absolute must. Dr. Diamond states that it "responds to the people's concerns about toxics by incorporating science and policy advances into a well-planned and broad framework intended to reduce toxic emissions."

We've heard many other positive reactions to this bill as well. Wendy Fucile, the president of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, said the following: "Nurses know the harm caused by toxic pollution and that's why we applaud the significant steps proposed by the McGuinty government to reduce dangerous levels of exposure." Rick Smith, the executive director of Environmental Defence, states, "The detox of Ontario has begun. This act will reduce our exposure to harmful chemicals and provide us with the tools to know what pollutants are being emitted in our communities." Andy King of the United Steelworkers Union said, "We ... support the legislation because it will help protect manufacturing jobs in this province and attract more. Companies need to reduce their chemical use to be more competitive in international markets and to meet increasing international standards." As he so aptly put it, it will create more jobs.

1430

Further, there's overwhelming support from Ontarians who want us to act now to reduce toxics in their envi-

ronment, so that they can enjoy a healthy quality of life. Recent findings of a poll by the Canadian Cancer Society indicate that the majority of Ontarians—close to 96%—support our commitment to put a toxic reduction plan in place. I don't know of too many other polls that support something to the tune of 96%.

Let me just remind the House of the bill's principal measures. If passed, this legislation would focus industries on reducing their use of toxic chemicals at the front end of the industrial process. It would, in effect, augment the traditional approach of managing toxics at the end of the process. Currently, most of our environmental legislation is about finding out what comes out the end of an industrial process—what comes out of the pipe, as it were. We would like to turn it around and find out how we can reduce the use of toxic chemicals going into the front end of the industrial process.

It would build on Ontario's existing legislation and practices that focus on reducing emissions—I talked earlier about the 57 increased air quality standards we have introduced within the last two to three years—as well as the proper handling and disposal of hazardous waste.

Regulated facilities would be required to account for the toxics they are using—they have to account for the toxics they are using—plan for their reduction and make a summary of that plan available to the public. Our government firmly believes that Ontarians have the right to know about toxics in their communities. The right to know by the public at large is part of the act. They have the right to know about toxics in their communities so that they can make informed choices for themselves and their families. Public reporting by facilities, as set out in regulation, would enable this to happen.

We will be consulting with stakeholders to determine the specific content of the proposed toxic reduction plans and reports, as well as the kind of information that would be available to the public. If passed, the act would be phased in over several years, with the first report submitted to the ministry as soon as June 2011. Our government would then establish an electronic reporting system and a website to ensure that Ontarians have easy access to the information.

I want to point out as well that while the proposed legislation requires facilities to produce toxic reduction plans, implementation of those plans is voluntary. There has been some debate as to whether it should be voluntary or mandatory, but the voluntary nature of these plans is consistent with the advice we have received from our expert panel, as well as the position taken by the Canadian Environmental Law Association and Environmental Defence. It is further validated when we look to jurisdictions like Massachusetts and New Jersey, which have had these laws on the books, in the case of Massachusetts, for 15 years, and of New Jersey for at least 10 years.

They clearly indicated that voluntary reduction plans lead to successful toxic reductions that actually take place in the workplace. Both jurisdictions report that

mandatory planning—the planning is mandatory—combined with voluntary implementation is an effective approach. We're learning from the experience of these two leading jurisdictions in North America. Voluntary implementation lets facilities set goals they can meet at a pace that reflects their capabilities and resources. Facilities can also be expected to speed up their timelines as they begin to see evidence of the cost savings. There are cost savings, and I will give you some examples of that shortly.

As Ontario firms realize the opportunities in the new green technologies and increase their competitiveness in the global market, they are looking for positive environmental practices from their suppliers and consumers, as we all know, are gravitating to companies that are green. It's certainly been the case over the last year or so, when just about every company advertisement talks about the greening of their own particular situation.

But let me just say this: If this act is passed, our government intends to invest \$24 million to help industries, particularly small industries—

Interjection.

Hon. John Gerretsen: —including the industries in the region of Durham, transform their processes, find green chemistry alternatives and reduce the use of toxics in their operation. Companies in Ontario that have already made the shift confirm its advantages—and I should tell you, some companies have already done this, totally on a voluntary basis. Let's just take a look at how it's affected some of their operations.

Dr. Hamdy Khalil, who's the global director of R&D and product development of the Woodbridge Group, states as follows: "As leaders in the field of reducing or eliminating toxic substances our company has recognized the benefits of adapting biotechnology and has pioneered its commercialization. We strongly support the government's toxics reduction strategy and encourage all Ontario manufacturers to identify ways and means to reduce toxics and realize the many benefits for workers, customers and society at large."

Let me just tell you about another company in Oakville, the home riding of my parliamentary assistant, Kevin Flynn. It's called Prokleen Washing Services. They have benefited from voluntary reductions they've already made. This company, Prokleen, cleans all classes and sizes of trucks and containers and has invested already to reduce its toxics. What have the results been? According to their own figures, \$198,000 in annual savings to the company, almost \$200,000, and—what's even more important to the environment—the elimination of 35 tonnes of toxics a year from the environment.

Fred Granek of the Ontario Centre for Environmental Technology Advancement states quite matter-of-factly, "It is possible for small- to medium-sized manufacturers to improve their performance and save bags of money," and that's been the experience, by and large, of most companies in Massachusetts and in New Jersey: mandatory plans, voluntary implementation. The centre reports that 55 pollution prevention and toxic reduction strategies

introduced by its clients experienced a payback time of less than one year—that's the Ontario Centre for Environmental Technology Advancement. Fifty-five pollution and prevention toxic reduction strategies introduced by its clients experienced a payback within a year.

Our made-in-Ontario approach would build on the federal method of toxics reporting that's required under the NPRI, and that's the National Pollutant Release Inventory. A key difference is that we would require reporting on the use of listed substances that are toxic while the federal process simply reports on the emissions. Again, we're looking at it from the front end of the manufacturing stream rather than from the tailpipe end.

I can assure you of this: It's not our intention to make this a difficult process for facilities or one that duplicates current work. They're already reporting on the vast majority of substances that we intend to introduce for reporting purposes initially to the federal system right now. We are proposing that companies build their plans and reports for Ontario on the work that they're already doing for the federal government. We are also looking at how we could align reporting timelines and dates with the NPRI to facilitate reporting.

There's one other fundamental area that our proposed legislation and strategy would address. Along with managing the use of toxics and ensuring that Ontarians have easy access to information that they should and have a right to know about, the proposed legislation is designed to propel Ontario forward in building a green economy and create green-collar jobs. I cannot stress this enough: It's all about creating a green economy and creating green-collar jobs. A green economy offers tremendous opportunity, and our leadership in this area will mean success and prosperity for our province and people, and a higher quality of life for all of us.

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As part of our toxics reduction strategy, our government plans to support innovation in the field of green chemistry and engineering. As professor Paul Anastas, who's a professor of green chemistry at Yale University, has said recently, people who originally thought that green chemistry was just about environmental concerns are now seeing that it also increases process efficiencies. It is an engine for the innovation side of the business and provides an ability to distinguish yourself in the market with new products with new capabilities.

Companies in this province, this country and worldwide will be increasingly looking for technologies and products to help reduce toxics, and we in Ontario are second to none in our potential to fill that need. We have the researchers and capabilities to be at the forefront of discovery, we have entrepreneurs looking for new opportunities in the shifting economy and we have a well-educated, highly skilled Ontario public eager to take up the challenge and deliver the products and services, and we intend to take full advantage of that.

Our government plans to turn the challenge of dealing with toxics into an opportunity and become a global leader in toxic solutions, a global leader in the green

revolution. Once again, if this legislation is passed, we will consult with industry to identify research priorities, set up academic chairs to help address barriers to commercialization, and develop professional capacity in the field as well.

Our government consulted widely on this proposed Toxics Reduction Act as well as on the strategy I have outlined. We've consulted with business, industry and academia as well as municipal, environmental and health organizations, including Cancer Care Ontario and the Ontario Medical Association. Last year, we posted a discussion paper on the Environmental Registry and received solid input that helped determine the best way forward. The proposed bill has been on the Environmental Registry and will remain there until at least May 7, and we invite public comment.

Our government is confident that we are proposing a fair and rational approach to toxics reduction. This act would benefit our people and our province and put Ontario at the forefront of toxics reduction in Canada. Because protecting our environment is a shared responsibility and no one jurisdiction can make all of the difference, I've also written to the ministers of environment across Canada and urged them to take a similar approach to toxics reduction in their own provinces for the benefit of all of us here in Canada.

Ontario's proposed Toxics Reduction Act and the toxics reduction strategy that's contained therein will strike the balance between protecting human health and the environment and supporting the transformation of business to the green economy. Reducing toxics is necessary, not just for today but also in the future. So once again, let's all work together in this House to make this bill a reality so that we can work towards a clean, green, healthy and prosperous Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm always pleased to listen to the minister. I am also pleased to compliment him on the fact that he is working with the federal government. The federal government has certainly taken the lead on that. In fact, it could be argued that under the leadership of the Conservative Party—this was in our election material, as you probably know, as you're used to imitating good behaviour. All I say to that is that most of what you said we wouldn't have much of a problem with.

The reason I'm being a bit—I'm really quite honestly waiting for the member from Haldimand-Norfolk, our critic, to add some substance to this, some meat to the bones, if you will. Most of this is actually going to be set up in regulation, as we know. This does give the minister a fair amount of power. I'm kind of looking for the administrative part of it. I think I found it in section 44, under "Other Matters." In there I see the emergence of the normal expectation of the Liberal government of a lot more red tape and a lot of government inspectors coming around to kind of check things out. In that section 44, for instance, there's a lot of red tape.

Section 45 is a good one. That section there is "Disclosure to Government of Canada." There should be

consistency for trade and other reasons between provinces and jurisdictions so there's clarity, so there's no ambiguity about it. Since the federal government's taking the lead on this issue and they're setting the standards, we should at least be consistent.

We're all in the interest of public safety, so there's some good and bad mixed in here. The bad part is the exemption of some of the persons working—for instance, an employee in the ministry can't be charged; do you understand?—even if they're making a mistake. In one of the sections there, section 49, "Regulations," they could also make regulations about things that aren't hazardous, which seems a bit strange. That occurs in section 48.

But again, when you look at it on the whole, on principle, this is something we support.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's a bit of an odd spot to be in this particular debate, because I listened to the minister intently and much of what he said I'm not going to take issue with. I think most people understand from a business perspective that if there are better ways of doing things as far as reducing your use of chemicals, there might be an offset when it comes to savings. Not only that, it's good for the environment in the end. But this bill's a bit odd. I'm really going to have to look at the details of this before deciding if I'm going to vote for or against, because what you're doing is saying you're going to make it mandatory to make a plan. That's the first step. But there's going to be no requirement to achieve any goals at the end of the plan, once the plan is done.

So you have to ask yourself the question, then why are you doing it? I know the government's going to say, "Well, at least if they're drafting the plan, they're looking at it. They're turning their attention to it, so therefore they will be more aware and it will encourage them to do whatever has to be done to reduce the amount of chemicals that are used by those particular plants." But if you don't mandate some sort of target at the end, at some time period after the plan is done, you've got to ask yourself, "Why are we doing this?" It would be akin to having an occupational health and safety act that says, "There will be a health and safety plan that is put in place in every workplace across the province of Ontario," and you will make sure that these plans are posted and that they're discussed between the workers and management and the Ministry of Labour, but at the end of the day not have any laws or regs or enforcement when it comes to bad practices.

I guess this is where we're going to have to have a little bit more explanation from the government. I know what some of it is already because I've been listening to the debate and I've been listening to and reading the media reports on this particular bill. But clearly, there's an intent for the government to be seen as doing something positive but really doing not a heck of a lot in the end. I look forward to the minister's comments in regard to how, in fact, we are going to encourage employers to reduce toxic use over a period of time with this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member for Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: I just want to congratulate the minister for his comprehensive approach to this problem, reducing toxic chemicals in our daily lives. As you know, he's also spearheaded the Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act, the source water protection act, the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, so you can see this is part of a continuum. As you know, he comes from a wonderful part of this province where they're very conscious of keeping not only their land environment but their water-bound environment clean. He represents the beautiful islands of Howe Island, Amherst Island, Wolfe Island. They have to protect those water-bound islands.

I would say that this bill is really part of an educational thrust, because many companies, many small firms and large firms, need to get expert advice on how to reduce their dependency on chemicals. For too long, not only Ontario firms but firms all over the world have found it easier to use chemicals to manufacture their goods, and as you know, they haven't looked at the downstream effects of what they use in production. So this \$25 million will be spent on educating our firms on how to reduce their dependency on these chemicals, so that in the long run, our waterways especially and our groundwater will not be impacted by these chemicals, which, for the most part, remain in our water courses for generations to come.

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This is critically important. It's a very astute approach, and I think it's one that's keeping in line with what many prudent jurisdictions are doing throughout the world. The minister is right in taking this very learned approach in reducing our dependency on toxic chemicals.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Question and comments?

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to have an opportunity to comment on the minister's speech on Bill 167, An Act to promote reductions in the use and creation of toxic substances and to amend other Acts.

Certainly, as the opposition, there is no doubt that we are aware of and supportive of the need for work on reducing the impact of toxics on people and the environment. In fact, as the member from Durham pointed out, it was part of our last election plan.

I was happy to hear the minister talk about not duplicating the federal government, because I know the past federal Minister of Health, Tony Clement, was developing this chemical management plan. I was with him on several occasions when he was talking about that, so it would seem not to make sense to duplicate the work that's already being done by the federal government.

Just a quick scan through the bill: I see that there's a lot of reporting required, and certainly that's wonderful. I'm not sure how the businesses that have to do the reports will feel. The only thing I would say is, there's nothing wrong with reports as long as they're actually accomplishing something, not just putting a further burden on industry.

As the Minister of the Environment is probably aware, he was talking about extended producer responsibility. I certainly support that. In fact, I had a private member's bill on product stewardship a few years back, so I support that in principle.

He was talking about electronic waste. I toured GEEP in Barrie with the member from York–Simcoe, Julia Munro, to see the good work they're doing on electronic waste.

I would say to the minister that they could make much more use of deposit return to actually incent people to bring things back versus their approach. They seem to be bringing in more taxes that aren't directly connected with an incentive for people to return things. So I think they could make much better use of that.

We'll be looking at this bill carefully. We're about to hear from our critic, so I look forward to our critic speaking next.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The minister has two minutes to respond.

Hon. John Gerretsen: First of all, I'd like to thank the members from Durham, Timmins–James Bay, Eglinton–Lawrence and Parry Sound–Muskoka for their comments.

The major difference in mandating that a plan be followed rather than a voluntary implementation of a plan is that if we mandate that companies follow the plans that they have put into place to reduce the toxics, the plans simply aren't going to be as strong as if we do it on a voluntary basis. They're not going to impose such heavy restrictions on themselves that they will be forced to follow than if we do it on a voluntary basis.

We're taking the best possible advice from the expert panel that I talked about earlier. We're taking the advice about what's happened in other jurisdictions such as Massachusetts and New Jersey. Although at first glance it may seem to be at odds, that it's better to have a mandatory following of a plan that they come up with, they tell us that it's a lot better for them to voluntarily implement their plan, because otherwise their plan simply wouldn't be as strong as it possibly can be.

From the experience of other jurisdictions, they've also clearly shown that over a period of time, the mere fact that they're planning the various toxic legislation—

Interjections.

Hon. John Gerretsen: And we're hearing some other comments in the background here.

The mere fact that we're doing it on a voluntary basis will, in fact, allow companies to use less of the toxic materials than they're currently using.

In any event, we look forward to the debate. We're always open to suggestions and committee amendments that will strengthen the bill, and we look forward to debate in the House and at committee later on.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I certainly welcome the opportunity to debate Bill 167, on the reduction of toxics. I do wish to discuss the benefits of our approach, which was

put forward, versus what is being proposed today. In my view, the basic differences are simple and impactful. These differences centre around the key element of working with already well-established approaches to toxic management currently in place through the Canadian government and through business best practices, all the while providing the carrot, or the incentives, along with the disincentives, or the sticks, to ensure that we do achieve some mutually shared toxic reduction goals. That's our approach: less emphasis on process, more emphasis on results.

We do question the timing of this initiative, given the economic realities in our manufacturing sector, our mining sector, our processing sector, our forestry sector and certainly in primary industry. We do question what relevance a 20-year-old Massachusetts law may have with respect to mining in Ontario, for example. I don't think Massachusetts is known as a big state as far as the mining industry goes. As for manufacturing, we also know that much of the industry and manufacturing have left the state of Massachusetts over the decades.

I do ask those present in the House to think back to the spills bill for a moment. You may recall at the time that the government's own Industrial Pollution Action Team called on this government for a comprehensive approach that would focus on incentives to better enable government to partner with industry in meeting those shared environmental goals we all strive for. You will recall, as well, that the recommendations of the same Industrial Pollution Action Team, also known as IPAT, put together with experts by the same government, were ignored. The recommendations for incentives to achieve clean environmental results in the spills bill were not adopted by the government.

I will quote a few sections from that government IPAT report. I refer to the executive summary: "We believe the long-term solution will require a multi-pronged approach, including introduction of regulatory requirements for pollution prevention plans; spill prevention plans, including multiple barriers; and spill contingency plans." But this is my point: The expert panel went on to call for "the legislative framework that incorporates economic or other incentives to go beyond compliance, regulatory requirements for operator training, improved spills notification and routine communication systems, including resolution of jurisdictional confusion." Again, that was from the government's own hand-picked Industrial Pollution Action Team.

Let's fast-forward to the introduction of the present bill. There's no mention of spills prevention, no mention of contingency planning, no mention of jurisdictional coordination, no economic incentives, no training, nothing even approaching a multi-pronged approach, as was called for in the report of the government of the day.

Five years later we have Bill 167. I feel we are witnessing the same mistake: the mistake of overlooking the carrots in favour of sticks. This is what we see before us. I propose that we have the same need for incentives to help deal with toxics that are being overlooked in the approach we see today.

I also fear that as with much of the recent pesticides experience, for example, we're seeing government decisions, legislation and, eventually, regulation based on emotion and concern as opposed to fact and science. Again, much as with pesticides, there are already well-developed toxic regulations available from the federal government and through the federal chemicals management plan, also known as CMP.

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I question the need to spend millions of government and business dollars on meeting goals that are already being met through extensive science-based work by our federal cousins. I'll get back to more on the concerns later during this hour, Speaker.

The bottom line: We in the PC caucus, we in opposition, look forward to working through this proposed legislation towards an effective plan that hopefully will see government and business work together to not only reduce but also, where possible, replace and eliminate the use of toxic substances and the related health and environmental hazards.

As opposition, there is no doubt that we are aware and supportive of the need for work on reducing the impact of toxics not only on humans but on our environment. In fact, as I reported when Bill 167 was introduced, this government proposed legislation that in some ways is actually following up on the lead set by the PC Party ahead of the 2007 election. Just to go back to that time, it was April 27, 2007, that we announced our PC made-in-Ontario plan to move on toxic reduction. As such, we have been somewhat bemused to see the McGuinty government follow our lead with regard to enacting a plan to reduce toxics. For example, we proposed drawing on the Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Act, also known as TURA, and then, five months later—this was September 24, 2007—the McGuinty Liberals proposed the same wording, drawing on the Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Act, also known as TURA.

As many know now, the Toxics Use Reduction Act, TURA, requires Massachusetts companies that use specified quantities of listed toxic chemicals to evaluate pollution prevention opportunities, implement them if practical, and measure and report the results on an annual basis. In Massachusetts, they must also evaluate their efforts and update their toxic use reduction plans every other year.

Now, there are varying reports as to the overall success of that Massachusetts legislation. However, it is generally accepted that in the initial years after its introduction in 1989 the program did lead to some important toxic reductions—first of all, a 50% reduction in the generation of hazardous waste; secondly, a 40% reduction in the use of toxic chemicals. That was 20 years ago. However, in later years—I don't think the Minister of the Environment made mention of this—the Massachusetts TURA program tells us a different story.

At one of the Ministry of the Environment public sessions last fall with respect to this toxics discussion paper, an industry person who had worked in Massach-

setts indicated that a good part of the reduction that is being attributed to the program and to the legislation is actually due to the fact that industry has been shutting down or leaving the state of Massachusetts for various reasons. So the implication is that only a portion of the reduction in toxics in Massachusetts could be attributable to that 20-year-old piece of legislation.

I would suggest the Minister of the Environment call Massachusetts. We were on the phone to Massachusetts this morning. We've received some e-mails, and I do wish to report to this House information received from the Massachusetts Chemistry and Technology Alliance. They outline their experience after 20 years of living with this law, and here's what they told us: Essentially, there's no evidence that this led to anything. The way it is structured, it has led to loss of jobs in Massachusetts and has done little or nothing to improve the environment down there.

There are really three significant changes that have occurred since the PC Party made our proposal to take a look at the Massachusetts model as far as toxic reduction plans.

First point: As I said, Massachusetts has the experience of 20 years now, and what they learned is that while there's some initial benefit—and that's what we understood as well—of writing toxic reduction plans, it's not sufficient for the reduction of toxics. There no proven environmental benefit from writing these plans. The reasons are that the way the Massachusetts law is written, the one that's now being copied by the Ontario Liberals, the result is paperwork and redundant plans that do not lead to reductions over the long term. This is known from 20 years of experience in Massachusetts.

Interestingly, it's only the state of Massachusetts that has adopted this legislation. It has never been copied. I'm told this, and I asked the question, why? And the answer is because it's ineffective. The fellow we communicated with this morning, Dave Wawer, with this Massachusetts industrial alliance, is presently proposing amendments to this particular legislation, and I would hope that those involved with this bill would take a look and work with Massachusetts as they try and rewrite a 20-year-old bill. Again, let's not make the danger of copying flawed legislation of 20 years ago. California looked at this in 2007; they dropped it.

Second point: When our party proposed this approach a few years ago, the federal government was not in the business of chemical management. Now we have a world-leading piece of legislation in Canada that has already reviewed 23,000 chemicals, identified those that require greater scrutiny, and has an action plan for reducing risk of those high-risk chemicals. Creating another piece of legislation with different requirements for different substances really doesn't make much sense.

The third point: We're currently living through one of the greatest recessions in our lifetime. Ontario, as we all know, has lost hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs. We're essentially fighting for our economic lives in this province. We can't handle the additional cost unless

there's a clear benefit. Creating useless reports at a high cost for business doesn't count as a benefit to the economy, and it doesn't count as a benefit to the environment.

In view of what has occurred in the last several years, what would make sense for this particular piece of legislation? First of all, don't copy word for word the Massachusetts law, which is flawed. Let's put together a made-in-Ontario approach, as we proposed before the last election, something that would truly get results and help protect the health and environment in this great province. This legislation must take advantage of the federal spending in this area by focusing on reduction plans for substances that already have been identified as a priority concern, and the feds are doing that. Third, don't saddle business with a useless and costly paper burden, but instead create value for business by helping them to learn about new environmental technologies and adopt them to their present business practices.

Just to carry on—and I'll have a chance to talk a bit more about that Massachusetts model a little later—before we get too far ahead of ourselves, I feel it's important that people here have an understanding of exactly what we're talking about when we refer to toxics. The word "toxin" is from a Greek word, *toxikon*, a poison relating to use of poison in arrows, for example; a poisonous substance produced by living cells or organisms. I think of the poison dart frog in central America that is used by aboriginal people to produce the poison for the arrows. I just found this out—I find this interesting; I don't know if anybody else is interested—the poison in the poison dart frog comes from the fire ant. If you've ever been bitten by a fire ant, you would know what I'm talking about.

As far as a toxic substance not produced by living organisms like the fire ant, "toxicant" may be a more appropriate term, although "toxics" is the acceptable plural. Again, when I talk about intoxicants—we're not talking about rum or cocaine or products like that. Toxics are substances commonly understood to be determined through laboratory and other studies to have a harmful effect on human beings, on wildlife, on the natural environment upon which we all depend. Toxics are often thought of as complex industrial chemicals, but they can also be naturally occurring substances as well. I think of ammonia, certain metals. I think of lead and mercury.

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The government of Canada's glossary of chemical substances defines chemical substances as, "Deliberately created, produced as a by-product of other processes or occurring naturally in the environment"; they "can be either elements or compounds." Adverse effects from toxics can result from short-term or long-term exposure and are influenced by a number of factors: dosage, obviously; duration of the exposure, as well as the sensitivity of the human being, the animal or the plant that's exposed to the particular toxic substance.

I wanted to bring to the attention of the House the definition of the word "toxic" as a starting point, because essentially this is where our concerns begin to take shape,

right from the beginning. You see, according to my understanding of the wording in the proposed legislation we're debating today, there really is no definition of the word "toxic" in this bill. I know it sounds strange. Here we are telling business and industry and people in Ontario that we will be ensuring reduction of toxics, and yet we don't tell them what those toxics are. We won't find out until the legislation is passed, and then we have to wait for the regulation phase.

It does say in the bill, under "Definitions"—and I don't consider this a definition—"toxic substance" means a substance prescribed by the regulations as a toxic substance for the purposes of this act." The general public are going to have to bear with some of this arcane language. So now, do we know what a toxic substance is? It's what the regulation says it is. I'm not sure if we are getting somewhere with this legislation or not. Maybe we aren't.

Furthermore, under the "Regulations" section of the act, we read subsection 49(1): "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations,

"(a) prescribing substances as toxic substances or substances of concern for the purposes of this act."

So again, after reading this legislation thoroughly, one can determine that we don't yet quite know what a toxic substance is, but we definitely want to reduce it once we find out what it is. This is where we stand with this legislation.

We get a little better idea where this government is heading when you look into the ministry's own Toxics Reduction Scientific Expert Panel. Under the terms of reference for this panel, it reads, and this is under expected outcomes:

"(1) Identify priority toxics for immediate attention.

"The panel will review lists of substances of known concern provided by the ministry, provide advice on actions that may further reduce releases and/or exposure and rank their priority for attention.

"(2) Provide ongoing advice on the assessment, management, prioritization and substitution of toxics....

"The panel will review lists of substances of emerging concern in Ontario and advise the ministry regarding assessment and/or action that may be taken to determine risk to Ontarians and/or to reduce releases and exposure."

However, I feel there is an easier way, a less costly, less duplicative, more effective way of doing this. This may come as news to the McGuinty government, but the federal government has already developed what many consider to be a world-class chemical management plan, also known as CMP. If I refer to CMP, that's what I am talking about. This CMP is governed by the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, CEPA, and has a well-known approach as far as deciding what chemicals need to be assessed and a rapid and aggressive timetable for doing those assessments and then developing regulation. So I'd like to repeat this, just in case some aren't listening, and I think it bears repeating: The federal government already has an established, comprehensive, technically sound basis via the chemical management plan,

the CMP, to assess and determine which substances are considered toxic. Adhering to the federal CMP would ensure that toxics identified for potential reduction are based on sound science and a risk-based process while avoiding any regulatory duplication and hence minimizing added cost.

The initiation of this process does date back to 1994 when the federal government created that list, that inventory of 23,000 chemical products used in Canadian commerce up to the late 1980s. This inventory—here is another phrase: the DSL; it's known as the domestic substances list. At the same time, new substance notification regulations were passed under the Environmental Protection Act requiring any substance not on the DSL to be screened and potentially controlled or prevented from entering the marketplace in Canada. In the past few years, the federal government has begun the work of assessing the potential risks of these DSL substances to human health and to the environment. In 2006, our federal government—and again I mentioned that chemicals management plan, the CMP; it includes a challenge program for approximately 200 high-priority chemicals from that DSL, that list. This program issues challenges to industry to provide information on batches of chemicals, 15 to 30 in a group, every six months. Based on the information received, the federal government assesses whether the chemical is CEPA toxic and determines appropriate risk management measures. But now we have the McGuinty Liberals jumping in to play “Me too,” if you will. At what cost? How many rules and regulations, forms to fill out and reports to file, how much red tape and paperwork do we need in this kind of legislation to deal with something that's already being dealt with at the federal level?

For those who may not be aware of the process, here is what the feds are already doing to assess and decide what exactly is a toxic process. If you look at a government of Canada website, there's a heading, “Determining What is Toxic.”

“Under CEPA ... both the Minister of the Environment and the Minister of Health are responsible for developing a list of substances which must be assessed in a timely manner to determine if they are ‘toxic’ or capable of becoming ‘toxic.’ This list is known as the priority substances list.” This one's referred to as PSL.

“CEPA ... requires that substances on the PSL be assessed within five years of their addition to the list. Environment Canada and Health Canada have a legal obligation to determine if these PSL substances are ‘toxic’ as defined in section 64 of the act. ‘Toxic’ is defined in terms of risks that substances pose to the environment or to human health.”

A substance that is found to be toxic under that section 64 through a priority substance list assessment, a screening assessment or a review of a decision of another jurisdiction is recommended for addition to the list.

Substances may also be added to the list of toxic substances in schedule 1 of CEPA 1999—again, I can name a section, section 90 of the act—without having gone

through a priority substance list assessment, a screening assessment or a review of other jurisdictions if, on the recommendations of the Minister of the Environment and Minister of Health, the Lieutenant Governor in Council is satisfied that substance is toxic. “A substance is ‘CEPA-toxic equivalent’ if it satisfies the definition ... as a result of a systematic, risk-based assessment. Such assessments can include determinations made under other federal statutes, or can incorporate appropriate elements of assessments done by or for provinces,” like Ontario, “or territories, international organizations or other appropriate scientific authorities.”

I guess the question is, how many new provincial bureaucrats and company experts are now going to be required to replicate this kind of process at the Ontario level?

1520

I'd like to make mention of another product that became well known through the federal process that is already in place. I'm referring to bisphenol A. That was the result of a federal program, the federal release in 2008 of its draft assessment of bisphenol A, also known as BPA, declaring it toxic under CEPA, the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, and proposing that baby bottles containing BPA be banned from the marketplace.

Those who follow this will know that bisphenol is a chemical compound found in hard, clear, lightweight plastics and resins. It's used in the production of various types of containers—drink containers—compact disks and automobile parts. It's even used as a liner in metal cans. However, animal studies suggest that once ingested, BPA may imitate estrogen and other hormones, according to the National Institutes of Health.

Health Canada's evaluation of bisphenol A, launched in November 2007, included a review of human and animal studies around the world, and research into how much of this chemical is leaching into consumer products—I think of baby formula, for example.

In their assessment, they did focus primarily on infants and newborns, and determined that the main exposure for newborns and infants was through the use of polycarbonate in baby bottles. When they're exposed to high temperature, we see the migration of bisphenol A into the baby's food.

The studies reviewed included a January 2008 study by the University of Rochester, which indicated that BPA stays in the body much longer than anybody had thought. This study was published in *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

Another study, published in September 2008, also examined BPA exposure in human beings. In that study, they took a look at 1,455 American adults and found that 90% of the participants had detectable levels of BPA in their urine. The researchers said that those with the highest levels of BPA had nearly three times the odds of cardiovascular disease compared with participants who had the lowest levels of BPA. The study also found that people with high BPA levels had 2.4 times the odds of

type 2 diabetes in comparison with those who had the lowest levels.

Some peer-reviewed journals have indicated that even at low doses, BPA can increase breast cancer and ovarian cancer cell growth and the growth of some prostate cancer cells—that was an animal study.

Yale researchers found that when BPA was administered to pregnant mice, it altered the gene responsible for normal uterine development. This was in the *Journal of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology* in June 2007. They theorized that “if pregnant women are exposed to the estrogen-like properties found in BPA,” bisphenol, “it may impact female reproductive tract development and the future fertility of female fetuses the mother is carrying.”

The result of Health Canada studies—their assessment, their review of all this literature—was that as of October 2008, Canada became the first country in the world to ban the import and sale of polycarbonate baby bottles containing bisphenol A. Here is an example of something that is real, effective and achieves results—results that are achievable when we work with science in a risk-based process, which we see embodied in this federal CMP approach.

The CMP, the chemicals management plan under the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, is exactly what I mean when I make reference to a neutral, objective, science-based approach.

I fear that there’s a tendency for this government to stray from that approach when we take a look at the kind of legislation that’s being proposed, let alone what may come up in regulation. I also fear that in the process of following this provincial direction, as I said, we’re duplicating costs, we’re duplicating the work, which could be more effectively used in other areas to reduce toxics in our society.

Really, this should not be about growing the bureaucracy or creating an additional unnecessary burden on business to fill out government forms and merely follow process, and I’m not alone in saying that.

Richard Paton, president and CEO of the Canadian Chemical Producers’ Association, had this to say: “Ontario had an opportunity to introduce legislation that would have protected its citizens while taking advantage of federal government spending in this area.... Instead, they have added significant cost to industry at a very bad time”—and, I might add, questionable costs not only to industry, but to government and to the taxpayer. I will get into a discussion a little later on the timing of this initiative.

I received a release from Ian Howcroft of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters echoing some of these concerns. It states:

“The proposed Toxics Reduction Act places a high emphasis on process rather than achieving results. Moreover, the Ontario government through this bill is moving in the opposite direction of federal-provincial harmonization. The federal chemicals management plan is one of the most stringent processes in the world.

“Duplicating this process at the provincial level is not necessary and we believe that Ontario must leverage and stay aligned with the federal government both in respect to the reporting of substances, as well as the assessment and science behind the list of substances deemed toxic.”

This release was signed by a number of industry organizations. They represent close to 80% of the industry in this province. Some of the names found on this release will be familiar, as they drive what’s left of our provincial economy, ever bearing in mind that we have lost well over 300,000 jobs now in the manufacturing sector. The statement I just read is signed by the Automotive Parts Manufacturers’ Association; the Canadian Chemical Producers’ Association, which I mentioned; the Canadian Foundry Association; Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters—I quoted from them; the Canadian Petroleum Products Institute; the Canadian Plastics Industry Association; steel producers; vehicle manufacturers; the forest industry; Ontario Waste Management; the Cement Association Of Canada; the Rubber Association of Canada; and the Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association. That’s an important list. They’re all saying the same thing: They want to be part of the solution, but this government is taking the wrong approach.

Speaking of wrong approaches, you would think that this government would learn from experience. I think of the recent pesticide experience whereby this province has told people and businesses in Ontario that it’s unsafe to use products that have been deemed safe by the federal government, by Health Canada. As we know, there has been much debate on the McGuinty pesticide ban that’s leaving the public—that there’s something inherently wrong with using these products that we use to grow our food, for example. I told this Legislature when it was first debated that the cosmetic pesticide ban would lead to roadblocks.

To that end, I’d like to read an excerpt from a local paper, the *Delhi News-Record*, April 23. They run a column by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. “The pesticide ban has generated growing debate relating to lost investment. Dow AgroSciences has initiated a challenge under the North American Free Trade Agreement to Quebec’s law banning a specific chemical.” As we know, Ontario always seems to follow the lead of late and Ontario followed the lead of Quebec in banning pesticides for cosmetic use.

1530

I just continue quoting from the OFA statement: “Under NAFTA, companies can claim that new laws or regulations are indirect expropriation of property without fair compensation. This is something farmers can relate to. This challenge puts the federal government in the ridiculous position of defending a Quebec law that prohibits the use of a product Health Canada has declared perfectly safe—a classic example of absurdities created by regulations that are intended to be politically correct rather than science-based.”

I think of the McGuinty greenbelt—the greenbelt delineated by boundaries drawn not by science but by

political science. So I do warn of the difficulties involved when you attempt to create duplicate processes in different, overlapping jurisdictions, really, to reach the same supposed goals. There's clearly a precedent with the very recent pesticides ban in Ontario, and I feel it does bear consideration before we move forward on this particular piece of legislation. It creates questions about the assessment process. We currently have an assessment process in Ottawa.

Not only are we concerned about the duplication and concerned about the lack of science-based assessment, but there is also concern that as businesses work to identify the long list of substances that the government's toxic panel will highlight, we will be missing opportunities to actually work on the key substances that cause most of the impact. So there seems to be a complete lack of direction towards a risk-based approach. That's why the Cement Association of Canada had this to say on the lack of risk-based initiatives contained in Bill 167, again the toxic reductions bill:

"A risk-based approach focused on quality of effort, rather than quantity, would be both more efficient and effective in reducing such risks.

"A legislated requirement to develop comprehensive ... balance systems and generic ... management plans for all of the listed toxic substances, regardless of the actual risk posed, would not represent a good use of industry or government resources."

This is a key criticism of the similar blanket approach to release reporting under—I'll quote a regulation—O. Reg 127/01 and the national pollutant release inventory: "The obligation to estimate releases on such a broad number of substances results in low data quality. As a result, all regulatory control efforts—where real risks are posed by the same substances—must then be accompanied by additional mandatory reporting and emission reduction requirements."

A more efficient and effective approach to the management of toxic substances in Ontario would be to establish toxicity thresholds for the priority substances in question—targeting reporting and management plan development only on those sectors and activities that handle or release the substances. Such an approach is consistent with what is being done in the United States and in the European Union.

Clearly, there is a need to ensure that we are putting our efforts, not to mention our dollars, towards where they would do the most good. Therefore, putting work, putting money into listing and tracking substances that are not released as part of normal operations, and I think of a refinery, for example, when we could be concentrating our efforts on those substances, those releases that have the most impact on the environment and on human beings—to not do that is really defeating the purpose of why we would even bring in a law like this.

If a substance is used but is not released as part of normal operations, it's not a risk to humans, to the environment, except in a case of an emergency situation that results in an uncontrolled release. Given this, the prime

focus should be on reduction of emissions and reduction of releases based on risk, where that risk is a function of the hazards coupled with the impact. Again, a risk-based approach is what we see in that federal chemicals management plan.

I wish to quote the Canadian Chemical Producers' Association:

"The federal risk assessment process is well respected, well resourced, costly (costs Ontario should not try to duplicate), and a global leader."

Through utilizing the federal risk-based, science-based work on toxic assessment already being done, the chemical producers go on to say that Ontario "would leverage the efforts of the federal government and would apply its requirements for planning reductions to the right substances—those that have been shown to actually pose a risk."

So the question remains, why should we be spending our government resources, our business resources, on an inadequate system that's doomed to achieve little in the way of effective results because of its lack of an effective focus and, obviously, lack of a science-based, risk-based, approach?

Why reinvent the wheel? It's rolling along quite well. Why replace your snow tires with summer tires in the middle of the winter? Why do that? It makes little sense to go through a bureaucratic process just for the simple reason of going through a process.

I think of another way of trying to explain this to those opposite. In 1969, I spent time in Southeast Asia, during the time of Vietnam, and talked to many US soldiers on R&R in Bangkok. I talked to one US soldier who explained to me in great detail what was going on in that Vietnam war. Every night, his platoon would conduct the obligatory patrol, but they set it up. They went into a park in Saigon and secured the perimeter with razor wire. They floodlit the whole park. Every night they would do the patrol in the middle of the night, as required, and then send a bullshit report to McNamara in the Pentagon. That's how that war was fought in the eyes of—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I would ask that the member withdraw that unparliamentary language. Thank you.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I do withdraw.

I felt very strongly about that at the time. That was not the kind of war that my father fought. That's probably why those guys lost the war. It was all about process, and it was not about getting results.

Having said that, we in the PC caucus are certainly cognizant of the fact that a toxics reduction strategy for Ontario would be beneficial. It would be an extremely worthy endeavour to protect the environment. But the point is, let's win this war. Don't take the Liberal way and just go through the motions, file a paper and maybe it looks good occasionally on the 6 o'clock news.

Toxics and their potential impacts have a long and varied history in this province and in this country. Obviously we have federal law, and it's incumbent on government to ensure that those substances with a scientific-

ally determined “most risk” are reduced or eventually eliminated from manufacturing, processing, industrial sectors.

There are reasons for this kind of vigilance in Canada. As I indicated earlier, we’ve got over 23,000 chemicals and substances that are in use every year. There are hundreds of new substances that come on board. These substances are used in the manufacture of vehicles, obviously, in paper, toys, electronics, food. They are used in the production of medicine. They are the basic elements for virtually everything we do as far as industrial or productive activity. Certainly, they can result eventually in release into the environment.

1540

So we’re in a province that’s got one of the largest and most diverse industrial and commercial sectors certainly anywhere in North America—or we did have, anyway. And until the McGuintyites took over, we did have a very significant industrial sector. This made Ontario a vibrant place to live and to work. It also means that in Ontario—it goes with that—we do have unique challenges, including dealing with some of the most significant releases of toxics and pollutants anywhere in Canada. Despite the pollution abatement efforts that have been made, I’m told Ontario industries release the second-largest amount of certain toxics in North America, so there is concern. There’s scientific concern and public concern regarding the presence of these chemicals in our environment and regarding their health implications. Of particular concern is the exposure of individuals to chemicals during certain life stages: early childhood, as I mentioned earlier, pregnancy.

The combined effects of toxic chemicals on our health are difficult to measure. Full toxicological evaluations have only been conducted on a fraction of the substances or groups of substances, and scientific concern is growing, in particular with respect to people in those biologically sensitive stages in their life, early childhood or prenatal.

It’s important to recognize other factors. Chemical exposure is just one of many factors. There are others with respect to certain diseases; cancer, for example. Social, economic and genetic factors can influence the initiation or the recurrence of many diseases. Although the precise effects of multiple toxics are not known, there’s a 2006 report—this is the Commission for Environmental Cooperation—which identified adverse childhood effects of particular concern in North America, again related to environmental pollution. The list includes cancer, learning disabilities, impaired endocrine function, birth defects and respiratory problems. Asthma seems to be an increasing problem.

In Ontario every year, the number of newly diagnosed cancers increases by 2.5%. There’s a 2.5% increase in cancer every year. As we know, tobacco decreases every year, but cancer is going up. Figure that one out. Maybe that’s circumstantial evidence. By the year 2020, there will be 91,000 new cancers diagnosed.

It’s important to note that not only environmental carcinogens but occupational carcinogens dispropor-

tionately affect certain sectors of Ontario’s labour force. The number of workers exposed to asbestos 30 years ago was about 16,600. Most of these people worked in construction. Some were in non-metal mining—asbestos, obviously. Ontario had four asbestos mines at one time. About 3,500 people worked there. Most of them quit running by the 1980s. People who work in petroleum refineries, manufacturing and automotive repair are also affected.

Ninety per cent of Ontario’s population lives in the Great Lakes basin; therefore, another very good reason to take toxic production very seriously. It’s a great source of fresh water but very sensitive to pollution and to direct discharges of toxics, not only directly into the water but from the air as well. We have municipal treatment plants; they are not designed to deal with these kinds of products. So there are lots of examples of how these toxics have impacted our world within the Great Lakes. In the studies that were done on herring gulls it wasn’t hard to detect the accumulated, persistent presence of DDT, PCBs, dioxins—mercury, in some cases—and other effects on children of mothers who were ingesting fish from Ontario waters.

In the Water Quality in Ontario 2008 Report, phosphorus levels in many rivers and streams, including some that feed into the Great Lakes, still exceed guidelines. That’s why we have algae. Hamilton harbour and the Don River are two of the hot spots in Ontario’s Great Lakes, although some progress is being made. There’s been improvement in acid rain in the Sudbury area, but there’s still evidence of areas “severely acidified.”

This helps us put the issue of toxics in perspective. Much of our daily lives rely on clean, unpolluted water, and there’s no doubt that there are levels of other products—pharmaceuticals, plastic and personal care products, and other things I don’t like to think about—found in our waterways. This is unacceptable.

Not to get sidetracked, I do want to once more express my concern on acid rain that this McGuinty government can be missing opportunities to eliminate power production emissions from our environment. It refuses to implement clean-air technology in Ontario’s coal plants. It has now been five years that nothing has been done to clean up the coal plants.

All the toxic-related impacts I have been talking about in this hour are, of course, a great concern for all of us in this House and across the province. Especially given the statistics presented by the MOE, we do realize that the province of Ontario is one of the top dischargers of toxics in North America, and we’re the number one source of toxics in Canada. We’re told that “Ontario industries release the second-largest amount of recognized developmental and reproductive toxicants in North America, behind Tennessee.

“Ontario industries release the fifth-largest amount of known and suspected carcinogens in North America, behind Texas, Ohio, Indiana and Louisiana.”

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What do you think of that?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Someone asks what we think of this. All of this is what prompted our party to take the

lead in announcing our own toxics reduction strategy in April 2007—there wasn't a heck of a lot announced by the NDP before that election, as I recall. We made this announcement five months before Mr. McGuinty tried and failed to duplicate our initiative. That has seen this government follow that lead and announce the legislation we see here.

As our environment critic then, Laurie Scott, stated in April 2007, "Toxic contaminants are a serious problem—one that's been building over too many years.

"In an era of rising cancer rates, it is vital that government, businesses and individuals work together to reduce—and wherever possible—completely eliminate the use of these substances and the health hazards they represent."

We understand that in an era of rising cancer rates, it's vital that government, business and individuals work together. We've got to reduce and eliminate the use of these products where we can.

At that time, we announced the opposition's plan—there was no plan at that time from either the NDP or the Liberals—of using carrot-and-stick measures to reduce and eliminate these products.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What exactly did you propose?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Well, one point exactly: working in harmony with the federal government to utilize the federal list of toxic substances, which identifies the higher-risk chemicals currently used by Canadian businesses. I mentioned this earlier. This is the key to everything I'm talking about. Again, it has to be science-based; it has to be a risk-based approach that avoids duplication and makes the best use of government and business resources while creating the most effective results.

1550

The plan went further, for those who are interested:

- requiring every Ontario business that uses a restricted chemical on the federal list to disclose their use of that chemical to the public;

- requiring businesses to prepare a plan which evaluates all of their options for reducing or eliminating the use of these toxins—the implementation will be left up to the individual operation;

- providing incentives for these businesses to adopt their plans and reduce the use of these chemicals by establishing a toxin reduction fund, taxpayer-funded—they could perhaps have a joint fund—and introducing such measures as targeted tax measures, in other words, carrots;

- sharing best practices to help small business learn from others how to take steps to eliminate these toxins by creating an online idea bank where entrepreneurs can learn first-hand from what similar businesses have achieved inside and outside of Ontario.

We made that announcement shortly after Mr. Tory accepted an invitation from Environmental Defence to have his blood tested for toxins. Environmental Defence came to Queen's Park—I think they came to his office—and analyzed Mr. Tory's blood, along with two other

political leaders, as I recall. Each politician was tested for 70 chemicals. They fall under the following groups: phthalates; PCBs—these are the polychlorinated biphenyls; PFCs—that would be perfluorinated chemicals; OCPs, organochlorine pesticides; organophosphate insecticide metabolites; PAHs, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons; and bisphenol A, the one that I referred to earlier. Seventy chemicals were tested; 46 were detected—66%. That would be in the three leaders of the day; that would be Mr. Tory, Mr. Hampton and Mr. McGuinty, as I understand it.

The number of chemicals detected in each volunteer ranged from 41 to 44. Many of the chemicals detected in the politicians are associated with adverse health affects. In total, and here's the list from Environmental Defence—I don't have the lab results with me—33 were carcinogens, 24 were hormone disrupters, nine were respiratory toxins, 39 were reproductive or developmental toxins and 12 were neurotoxins, detected in the three volunteers.

Of the three Ontario politicians, Dalton McGuinty had the highest concentration for OPIMs; Howard Hampton had the highest concentration for PAHs—that's the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons—and the phthalates; and John Tory had the highest total concentrations for PCBs, PFCs and OCPs. Dalton McGuinty and Howard Hampton had the highest concentration of BPA. That's the bisphenol A; that's the product that's found in tin cans that are lined with plastic.

That was a good public relations move that has obviously helped create better understanding within the Ontario public of the residual accumulation of these products in three political leaders in the province of Ontario. That was the kind of testing that helped—actually, the PC Party used that as a bit of a springboard for our announcement on toxic reduction and a plan that called for a number of basic points that I have explained during this past hour.

Just to wrap up, we asked this government to make amendments to this legislation, come up with something that works and come up with something that gets results. Don't just go through the motions and go through the process, somewhat akin to the example I used of that GI in Vietnam. They lit up a park in Saigon, did the obligatory patrol, and every night they sent the silly report to McNamara in the Pentagon. They lost the war. They were caught up in a bureaucratic, paper-driven process that really had nothing to do with anything, and they lost.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want to say at the outset—and I'll be speaking in about 10 minutes—that New Democrats strongly support strong government action when it comes to protecting the health of our environment and the health of Ontarians.

When I listen to the member from Haldimand-Norfolk—we're able to reflect all of our differences beautifully. The member from Haldimand-Norfolk says, "We should do less. We should have less bureaucratic

red tape for corporations, which includes how we control chemicals on these poor sectors that have to provide jobs for workers. So we should have little control.” Marchese, representing the NDP view, says, “We should have more control,” and then you’ve got the Liberals in the middle saying, “We’ve got to go somewhere in the middle.” This is the ideology that’s being expressed here today, and it’s beautiful because I’m going to attack the Liberals in a short while for not doing enough, but that’s the way it is.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I’m going to support you a little bit and attack you as best I can while saying to the Tories—when they say, “How many forms should corporations fill out?” I say, “As many as it takes,” because I believe that the health of our kids and the health of human beings should override the needs of the corporate sector.

In my mind, there is no confusion about this. It’s not a question of whether or not they should be filling out forms if the health of our kids and the health of human beings is affected by it. For me, the whole idea of, “Oh, more forms to fill out, and there’s no evidence that chemicals are really damaging human beings”—please. How many years have we been dealing with this, for God’s sake? Where are you folks on this issue? You’re so far behind. I look forward to more debate from the other Conservative members.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I’ve heard so much rhetoric about, “One political party believes this and another political party believes that.” Let’s come back to what Bill 167 is all about. Proper science-based methodology requires the thorough tracking of toxic compounds from the point at which they’re produced until the point at which they’re disposed of, and that’s what this bill is all about.

Bill 167 requires designated facilities to keep track of what they generate in toxic substances and also to keep track of where it goes. If we want to get toxic substances out of our environment, then we have to be able to find them, and that’s what the regulations in this bill do.

To get into some specifics, Bill 167, the proposed Toxics Reduction Act, if passed, would require designated facilities to do basically three things: track and evaluate their current use and release of toxins—that’s a good thing; develop a plan to reduce the use and the release of the toxic substances—that’s a good thing; and make a summary of the plan available to the public—that’s a tremendous thing.

If we want to, for example, reduce phosphate concentrations in our rivers and our lakes, then we need to be able to track them. We need to be able to help our industry switch to less toxic substances and move to cleaner, healthier alternatives. People support this because it’s really a fairly simple concept. More than 90% of Ontarians equate the reduction in toxic substances with something like climate change in their priorities. That’s what this bill does. It helps track toxic substances through supply chains and enables consumers, retailers,

distributors, wholesalers, agents, integrators—you name it—to determine how much toxic material flows through their business, and if they know about it, they can minimize it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Durham.

Mr. John O’Toole: I came back this afternoon to listen primarily to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk because he has been working on this file for a long time—not just this, but on the environment generally. He’s qualified to make some of his observations, which I think is important as well. He has, I believe, a science-based background and, as such, something he said that impressed me most is the simplicity of what he’s saying that, if something works and is something that can be verifiable—it’s sort of a science-based approach.

1600

There is good reason to think that they are following the federal government’s lead, which is encouraging. I think it’s important, as well, to make sure we have harmonized lists, for the sake of having uniformity and consistency between provinces in Canada, instead of having another big wow or something that isn’t compliant from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, where they’re moving products from one province to another. Those kinds of things are important to get it right. Use science and use the resources that the federal government, the Harper government, is actually setting out. I think it is a good form of compliment to the federal government, imitating them so closely.

But I do become worried when I look at the onerous mechanisms the Liberals use to implement these changes. There are whole sections here about creating red tape, basically: section 42, about compliance and inspection, and also refusal of information in section 43, “Offences.” There’s a whole litany of things in this large bill. It’s mostly about, first of all, saying we’re going to do what’s right—and we support that—but then you’ve got this whole section, called “Other Matters.” You look in there and you see the red tape.

You know, it’s doing the right thing and doing it so that you can observe it and so that people can understand it. That’s what this bill is really about. We support the idea of eliminating toxic materials—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. Further questions and comments?

Mr. Dave Levac: The interesting discussion we’re having today is about a bill that’s actually been designated many times before under the moniker of brown-field, so I want to bring us back a little bit in front of the bill to discuss whether or not we believe that these types of regulatory streams are important.

If you look back, in the 1950s and the 1960s there were an immense number of chemicals and toxins that were used as cleaning agents and for manufacturing. They used to literally just simply have the barrels filled with this stuff, open the back door and pour it out into the ground. What we found were these brownfields that were filled with toxins, permeating into the water table and

going through the different territories that these companies were doing.

Now, I'm not pointing a finger of blame, because the science wasn't there. We didn't understand; we didn't recognize. As we've evolved and come to know what those brownfields were all about, we're now moving into the next era. We're taking money to fix the brownfields. We're now putting it into the vernacular; people understand what brownfields are. This is the next evolution of what we need to do in order to prevent brownfields from ever happening again, not only in the terms of the land, air and water that we breathe, we drink and we work on, but also the people who deal with these chemicals. The number of incidences of cancer that took place were just phenomenal during that time period, and we're just catching up to that now.

Look at our firefighters. We've had to regulate for those types of things that they've had to actually fight fires—chemicals burning and not knowing what that was. As a matter of fact, to this day we still don't know what some of those burned chemicals were in combination with each other. We still don't know what it does.

So this is a piece of legislation that moves us to the next level. It's a natural step that we need to take in order for us to continue to be serious about what we claim is our responsibility: to take care of the people of the province of Ontario. I fully support this bill and look forward to its passage.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Haldimand–Norfolk has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the feedback from various members in the Legislature. The member for Trinity–Spadina is going down the bureaucratic paper route, and he made mention of, how many forms does it take to fill out—well, how many does it take in supporting that kind of approach? I do say to him that there are much more effective ways to deal with some of these toxic chemicals than just to fill out forms and file a report every year. It's very important to engage the enemy and to get some results.

I mentioned that we phoned Massachusetts this morning, and I got an e-mail from a Dave Wawer. He's the CEO of the Massachusetts Chemistry and Technology Alliance. As far as filling out forms, they've been filling out forms ever since Willie Horton was in penitentiary in Massachusetts, ever since Dukakis was the governor of—

Mr. Mike Colle: That was an uncalled-for reference. He's already made one comment that's unparliamentary, and another one's been made—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): I would ask the member from Haldimand–Norfolk to withdraw that reference.

Mr. Toby Barrett: They've been filling out forms ever since Dukakis was governor.

Mr. Mike Colle: That's better.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Is that better? Coming from the left-winger over there—

Interjections.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Anyway, from Massachusetts, I got this this morning. The only fact I can link directly to these chemical use reports is that as manufacturing jobs have left Massachusetts for other states or countries, the reporting of chemical use has declined. So there is a direct link between filling out these forms for all these years—the reporting of chemical toxics went down because the industries, according to this memo I got this morning, have left Massachusetts over those years. So you're not going to pull this off just by a report every year.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It is a pleasure—first of all, I would like unanimous consent to stand down our lead, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member has asked for unanimous consent. Is it agreed? Agreed. Thank you.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thank you very much, Speaker.

From the outset, I will say that I am not an expert. I have strong feelings on the matter, but I am just an ordinary guy, you know, who reads this and that. But please allow me to welcome you to this political forum. It's 4:05 and we're on live. It is a pleasure to speak to the bill, I have to say.

I've got tell you, I disagree so strongly with the Conservative Party on this that I don't know how to hold myself back. I mean, these are the people who say we need science to guide us. These are the same people who led the fight against the dangers of tobacco because there wasn't enough evidence that smoking killed people. So we've delayed the science of smoking-caused cancer for 70 long years. It's possible that there are still many Tories and their ilk who probably say we still don't have enough science to link smoking and cancer. I almost believe that they still believe that.

But the argument is the same. These are the chemicals that have been killing people. There are hundreds of chemicals in these cigarettes. I invited Devra Davis to a meeting a couple of years ago to talk about the right to know—the right to know who's who in your community, what sector is producing what chemical, what it's spewing out into our water and into the air. We have a right to know.

For me, the ideal solution would be to ban all chemicals that we suspect or know are carcinogenic. That would be the better way to go, rather than just the right to know. But even the right to know is not strongly connected to this bill. I want to speak to that in a few moments, and I can.

Devra Davis wrote a book called *The Secret History of the War on Cancer*. It's a good book. She said that Germany knew in 1930 about the link between smoke and cancer, and they suppressed that information.

The sad thing is that even the Royal College of Physicians delayed its 1962 landmark report on smoking

and health for years, due to the tobacco industry influence.

So many people knew the dangers of smoking and the chemicals connected into that cigarette, built into the cigarette, and the effects of it, and they were suppressed by so many people, including, as I say, the Royal College of Physicians. Please. Come on—"science." We know that cancer, asthma, infertility, learning problems and birth defects are all being increasingly linked to our exposure to toxic chemicals. We know this, yet the Tories want to say we need more science and more research. Every day we get more cancer, more asthma, more infertility problems, more learning problems, more birth defects than ever, and they say, "We've got to study the matter." Come on; it's tiring. I get tired, after many years of being in this place, to listen to this crap.

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, but I get tired. I'm sorry; you tire me. You tire me out. And then we know, and the member from Haldimand-Norfolk understands, that in North America, Ontario is second—

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Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Member from Simcoe North.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: —that in North America, Ontario is second only to Texas in the tonnes of toxic chemicals being released into the air—

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: He's so wrong in everything he says.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Whoa, whoa. You'll have your two minutes. Hold on.

Ontario's second only to Texas in the tonnes of toxic chemicals being released into the air and water, and going to our landfill sites. This is no proud record—

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: You don't know what you're talking about.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Yeah, but if you know what you're talking about you can do that for 20 minutes. Take your turn. Calm down.

This is a shocking fact and one that should underscore the need for a strong toxics reduction plan for the province.

And then more facts: Ontario use of cancer-causing and reproductive toxins is higher than jurisdictions with similar emissions levels. In 2004, Ontario released three million kilograms of known or suspected carcinogens into the province's air, including—I can't even pronounce these carcinogenic terms. Let me try: trichloroethylene, ethylbenzene, styrene and formaldehyde. These are chemicals that kill. I can't even pronounce them, so ugly are these terms—and they make them unpronounceable so that people don't learn how toxic they are. This leaves Ontario as the fourth-highest emitter of carcinogenic chemicals in North America. And when it comes to reproductive toxins, Ontario ranks even worse: We are the second-highest emitter of reproductive toxins, second only to Tennessee, releasing more than four million kilograms into the air in 2004. Ontario's industries account

for 36% of a total Canadian discharge of reportable chemicals into the air and 50% of discharges to water. This is serious stuff. We're debating as if it's not real.

Then the Liberals produce this plan, as is their trademark, to pretend they're doing something big, like the way McGuinty comments on the need for "a tough new toxic reduction law and a carcinogen reduction strategy." He calls for a plan that "puts Ontario at the forefront in North America on tackling this issue." So you listen to this man, this Premier, and you think, my God, we're going to get something really, really tough. And then you look at the content of the bill and you say, where's the tough McGuinty on this matter? I look at this stuff—and I'll do my best; again, as I say, I'm no expert—but I look at it and I say, let's look to see what he says. It says it's to track and quantify toxic substances used and created, prepare a reduction plan for each toxic substance, report progress on reducing substance released into the environment and make a summary of the plan. That's it. The member from Mississauga-Streetsville puts it out as if this is real revolutionary stuff. Please, member from Mississauga-Streetsville, you're doing something but don't pretend to be proud of something that's really not very strong.

Let's look at it, because the purpose of the bill is what I just wanted to allude to. Here's what the bill reads: Protect human health and the environment by reducing the use of toxic substances—which seems okay, right; promote the use of safer alternatives to such substances, recognizing the public right to know the identity and amounts of toxic substances in the community from various facilities and apply the precautionary principle of sustainable development to these issues. Whoa, whoa. Sorry. This is what the Canadian Environmental Law Association was recommending. I beg your pardon, I wanted to read what the purpose of the bill, as stated in the bill, versus the purpose of the bill as it was put out by the Canadian Environmental Law Association, so I have to begin again.

Starting from the very beginning of the bill, New Democrats are concerned with its stated purpose, and Bill 167 reads, "The purposes of the bill are to prevent pollution and protect human health and the environment by reducing the use and creation of toxic substances, and to inform Ontarians about toxic substances." That's the extent of the purposes.

When you hear what I read, which I must repeat now, what the Canadian Environmental Law Association—their purpose versus what the bill does, you can see the dramatic difference between one and the other and how little the Liberal government does versus how much is expected of them from people in the know. So to re-read what the Canadian Environmental Association proposed, that is, to protect human health and the environment by reducing the use of toxic substances; promote the use of safer alternatives to such substances—which they do not propose; recognize the public's right to know the identity and amounts of toxic substances in the community from

various facilities; and apply the precautionary principle and principles of sustainable development to these issues.

Of these four principles, only the first one is included in Bill 167—only the first one. The Liberals are quite happy with that. For them, it suffices. They take none of the other purposes that the Environmental Law Association is recommending. Why not? Why don't you take that on? Maybe the parliamentary assistant will help me out in his 20-minute speech coming right after, but he might be able to answer this question: Why didn't you take the definition as recommended by the Canadian Environmental Law Association as yours, in your purpose, versus only the one element of that bill? Why not? I look forward to the member from—

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Oakville.

Mr. Rosario Marchese:—Oakville to help me out on this.

And there are other issues. On the issue of targets, the member from Oakville, Bill 167 sets no targets for toxic reductions and benchmarks regarding the success of this initiative. In the ministry-created minister's Toxic Reduction Scientific Expert Panel, the recommendation for targets is made twice. On July 2008, in the memorandum to the environment minister, the expert panel states the following: "Ontario's pollution prevention legislation should ... include clear, viable and progressive goals (i.e., a percentage reduction in toxics use and release in the province within a specified period of time); the statute should include renewable toxics reduction targets, and a mechanism for monitoring and public reporting on achievement of those targets. The panel notes that goals are not set in the current discussion paper ... and program."

Ontario's failure to create a set of targets for toxics reductions contravenes the most successful toxics reductions legislation like those in Massachusetts. By failing to create targets, Bill 167 is also ignoring the advice of CELA, the Canadian Environmental Law Association, that recommends a 50% reduction of releases and a 20% reduction in use within five years of the first mandated reporting period. That's the second one I would like the member from Oakville to comment on, if he's taking notes, but I suspect you're not going to bother retorting to what I'm asking you. I'm assuming, but I'll wait and see.

The third one is sectors affected by the bill. No particular sectors are defined in Bill 67 except in the MOE's discussion paper; it identified two sectors to be affected by the toxics reduction bill: manufacturing and mineral processing. That is all. Absent are waste treatment plants, energy generating plants, some of the highest emitters of toxic substances. There is some terrible reasoning in restricting two sectors rather than aiming a toxics reduction strategy at any facility that is endangering the health of Ontarians through the release of a reportable substance.

Why are you not including everything that affects the health of kids, women and men, young and old? Why don't you include every sector imaginable that is hurting, has been hurting and will hurt, will damage and will kill young, old and not so old on a regular basis? I look forward to the member speaking to what I have said.

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On the issue of schedule 4 chemicals, it's very interesting. Schedule 4 is set to be phased in as well, and according to the MOE's discussion paper, schedule 4 chemicals are classified as "reproductive toxins, neurotoxins and mutagens," which are chemical agents that change genetic material, DNA, "as well as carcinogens." The question is, when is schedule 4 set to be phased in? The answer is, perhaps never. We don't have a clue. My sense is that it may be done sometime in the future, but we don't know. The member from Oakville may know, and I'm hoping he's going to tell me and the citizens of Ontario. If you know, let me in on it. I'm going to—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I would. I think I would. I think the citizens and taxpayers of Ontario would get it, too. If you're only including two sectors, why are you doing that? And if you know that other places—

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'll have my 20 minutes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You will. I know you will.

My view is this, member from Oakville: You're not going to respond at all to my questions. I can guarantee 99.9% you will not respond to my questions—guaranteed.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Don't be so negative.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm just predicting what he may or may not say, and I suspect he won't respond to my questions. On the issue—

Mr. Dave Levac: What if he does?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: If he does, I'm going to listen, and we'll see, because even if he responds, I suspect he will say very little or nothing. But we'll see. And if he doesn't agree with me, he'll simply say, "I don't agree with you," as a way of just not talking about the issue, which is brilliant, of course. I understand.

Then there's the whole issue of fees. Bill 167 fails to create a fund and does not impose fees on the regulated businesses, and we believe this is a mistake. The minister's Toxics Reduction Scientific Expert Panel had the following to say about this issue: that "the toxics use reduction strategy be funded by fees levied on the regulated community, recognizing the cost saving potential of efficiencies discovered through the toxics use reduction planning required by the toxics use reduction legislation." The absence of a fee structure and creation of a fund has grave implications for the success of this strategy. You need to have a fund so you can have experts. You need to have oversight. You need to have research. You need to have planning. All this requires some bucks, which you're not going to put into place. We believe those who are killing us should be paying a fee so that we have a few dollars to be able to provide the experts, do the oversight, do the research and do the planning.

Member from Oakville, please help me. Help the citizens. If you don't want to help me, help the citizens understand why you're not doing it. And if you don't want to help the citizens, help the taxpayers, because they understand too. I'm convinced you guys have taken this little measure, as you always do with bills and never dare

do what is right, because you are so afraid. You're so afraid of everything and you never want to be able to take anything on with the right strength, the right determination and the right focus. That's what you do all the time.

We know that this has worked very well, and the Massachusetts experience tells me and tells many others that all this has worked very well. I'm going to read what lessons we've learned from that jurisdiction. In Massachusetts, the Toxics Use Reduction Act set the standard which we should be, at a minimum, meeting, or hopefully surpassing. Their legislation was introduced in 1989, and since then the following has been achieved: a 41% reduction in toxic chemical use, a 65% reduction in toxic waste, a 91% reduction in on-site releases, and a 58% reduction in toxic chemicals in products shipped out of state. All this occurred between 1990 and 2004. The reality is that Ontario is set to introduce a toxics reduction strategy that would place us at the bottom of the barrel when compared to other jurisdictions.

So I say to you, member from Oakville, the parliamentary assistant: Be bold, be clear, tell us why this bill is so weak. I challenge you, New Democrats challenge you, to do a better job. Bad economy or good economy, if these toxins and these chemicals are killing us, it doesn't matter. Our health overrides the concerns that corporations might have. My health overrides everything else, and I believe citizens and taxpayers agree with me. So I want you, member from Oakville, to clearly respond to some of the issues I've raised, because I know our critic is going to raise so many more tomorrow. Please, before he gets on to speak for an hour, help me, help the citizens and help the taxpayers with your knowledge of this.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments.

Mr. Mike Colle: I think the member from Trinity–Spadina has raised some good questions. I know if the member from Oakville, the parliamentary assistant, can't get the answers for the member today, he will certainly be able to come up with those answers. I think what the member from Trinity–Spadina brought forward has been very helpful. He gets you to think.

As he was saying in his introduction—remember, if you grew up in the 1950s, the Marlboro Man. And all those doctors were advertising smoking: “Most doctors smoke du Maurier” or whatever they used to say in the ads on TV. We were told, “Don't question the scientists from the tobacco companies. They say that cancer is not linked to tobacco smoking.” They lied about that for decades and decades. Not to say this is comparable to that concern over the cancer and tobacco, but it's the same mindset the Conservatives had: “We've heard nothing about protecting the chemical industry and protecting the manufacturing of chemicals.” We say, yes, they have a right to work in partnership with government, but there also is an obligation by government to ensure that the chemical producers are doing things that are copacetic, that are not harmful to the environment. That's all. Both are compatible. You don't have to have a hostile chemical industry.

This legislation will try to work in partnership with these industries to make sure they're not unnecessarily using these toxic chemicals in production, and both can benefit by it. I think the chemical industry, which is interested in good public policy, will support this type of partnership. That's what this bill tries to do: protect public health and protect our industry. That's why we are trying to put this bill forward.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. The member from Simcoe North.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm interested in hearing his comments. I understand where he's coming from, because he said he wasn't an expert—and I understand why he's not, as he delivered his speech. Basically, he has no trust whatsoever toward any of our corporate citizens, including the people who make energy.

We see this—and I support some of the comments my colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk made when he talked about more bureaucracy. We've already seen almost 300,000 manufacturing jobs leave this province since this government took over. We know there's not a friendly environment out there toward business. They may try to spin this legislation and some of the comments, saying, “We're here to protect our friends in business,” but the reality is that's not the case at all. If that was the case, we wouldn't have seen almost three tenths of a million people out of work in the manufacturing industry.

I'm disappointed in the fact that some of the comments are directed in a negative way toward our caucus or toward Conservatives. The fact of the matter is, at the federal level there's been a lot of work done on this particular subject. The detailed list of data has been acquired, and I know that Tony Clement has worked on that himself as a federal member of Parliament and a cabinet minister.

As we move forward, I would hope there could be more trust and less bureaucracy toward business.

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I hope there's no one in this House who would want any kind of toxins impacting any citizen of the province of Ontario, because these are our kids and our grandchildren who we have to protect for the future. But at the same time, they have to have jobs as well, and we have to make sure that we work in partnership with our industry so that we can continue to stop this exodus of jobs out of the province of Ontario.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm sure that the comments made by the member from Trinity–Spadina were, as usual, quite eloquent and made his points. But I'm going to pick up on the first part of what I heard when he started to speak, and that is, this legislation is not a bad idea, as far as the concept goes. I think that none of us disagrees with the idea of being able to make sure that the employer community out there, industry and others, is able to put together a plan that lists the types of chemicals that they're using within their processes. Certainly we know by experience that in other jurisdictions where that's been done and there's been some force of time tied to it, as far as some guidelines of when they should be

reducing, by how much, and with targets, there has been a fairly significant reduction of toxins going into our atmosphere and going into the groundwater. But just as importantly, it has been a savings for those companies that have gone that way.

The government is doing, I think, something that is not a bad idea. Certainly we support the idea of having legislation that would force the organizations out there to put together a plan to identify the types of toxins that they're using within their employ. But then the next part is what's missing. I agree somewhat with the Conservative member in the sense that, if you're just doing a plan, all you're really doing is creating a bureaucracy—not a bureaucracy, but you're creating somewhat of a burden on industry to do something of which we say we want nothing done with in the end. That's kind of the conundrum you hear. On the one hand, this legislation's going to say, "We want the employer community to put together a plan," but there's going to be no mechanism to say what the targets are that we want them to reach within a certain period of time. Without those targets, what you're really doing is educating the employer about what they're using, but you would think they do that already. So it's a bit of a veiled piece of legislation.

I look forward to the continuation of this debate. I'm sure that I'll get an opportunity to speak on this further, but I think that's probably the biggest criticism, at this point, that I can see.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Peterborough.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Indeed, I think the member from Trinity–Spadina made some really key points this afternoon during second reading debate on Bill 167, the Toxics Reduction Act.

I just want to share a bit of a story. People in this chamber who know Peterborough well will know that in the mid-1960s, Canada Packers had their eastern Ontario slaughterhouse located where the Holiday Inn is located in Peterborough today.

I remember as a very, very young child that when the cattle would come into Canada Packers at that time, they would slaughter the cattle, the pigs and other farm animals. They had sluiceways right at the back of the operation. I really don't want to describe today what was put into Little Lake, which was essentially part of the jewel of the Trent-Severn system. Of course, one of the offshoots of that was that the water quality, from a public health perspective, was severely jeopardized. Little Lake flows into the other parts of the Trent-Severn system.

I know that the member from Durham is paying attention to that. As a fellow who grew up in Peterborough, he would remember that operation rather well, as it was the central slaughterhouse for Canada Packers.

Also, three or four decades ago, GE in Peterborough, when they used to test their transformers, one of the ways they would do it was to fill up the transformers—they had big pits there that would be full of oil that contained PCBs. Prior to shipping those transformers on flatbeds, they would drain the PCBs out of those transformers, and

it got into some of the water sources around the Peterborough area. Thank goodness that of course, over a period of time, GE made tremendous advances to clean up that particular problem.

We know what Bill 167—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. The member from Trinity–Spadina has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I thank the members for their two-minute contributions.

To the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, they also developed what was called a "safe cigarette" many years ago. It was no safe cigarette; it kills. Smoke kills. Do I trust the tobacco companies on this? No. Do I trust some of these corporations, some of these owners of industry on the issues connected to chemicals? I do not. Does it matter to me whether there is a recession or the economy is good, if companies knowingly are producing and using chemicals that are killing me? Does it worry me? I say they should not. Their right to use those chemicals should not override my right to be protected—absolutely not. And if it means red tape and people filling out forms, fill them out. Get rid of those toxins; eliminate them. They should not be used.

In my mind, we know that cancer, asthma, infertility, learning problems and birth defects are all being increasingly linked to our exposure to toxic chemicals. Everybody knows it except those who deny it: the industries and those who defend them. I don't defend that kind of killing of human beings; I do not. And so I'm saying, you, the government, have done a great deal of research on this in the last year. You have used the minister's toxics reduction expert scientific panel that made a lot of recommendations for you, which you have not adopted. Why not? You can have a bill with teeth, and you can set a higher standard. You should be doing that and not just having a little bill.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It certainly is a pleasure to rise today. Obviously, I'm here to speak in support of Bill 167, our government's proposed Toxics Reduction Act. I think it's a wonderful piece of legislation. I think it comes forward at a time when people in our society, both from the business world and from other portions of our society, are asking that this type of legislation be brought forward.

Earlier in the afternoon, as part of the debate, we had remarks from the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable John Gerretsen. He was saying that he sees this bill as taking action on toxics reduction. What it means to him, really, is that it's about building a high quality of life for all of our people in Ontario.

Toxins in our environment are a great concern right now; I've seen some of the public polling on this. It's a top-of-mind concern for a great many Ontarians in all of our constituencies throughout the province; not just in Liberal constituencies but certainly in Progressive Conservative and NDP constituencies. They say that close to 90% of people in Ontario believe that reducing toxics is

as important an environmental concern as air pollution, water pollution or climate change.

One of the great things about being around politics for so long is that you see how issues change in their importance to society. I go back to the days when you used to be able to spot the environmentalist in the audience. You'd look out there, and it would be the person with the John Lennon glasses, the long hair, the hemp shirt and the sandals. You can't do that anymore; that's changed now. When you go out to community meetings in my neighbourhood, or when I go out and speak around town, when people are concerned about the environment, you can't spot the environmentalist anymore because we're all environmentalists. What began as Pollution Probe, Energy Probe and some of the groups in the past, which were supposedly the anti-establishment, has now indeed become the establishment. I think it's an issue whose time has come, and people are starting to understand that you can't take apart the link between business, the economy and the environment. They're linked intrinsically, and that's a bond that can't be broken.

Obviously, there are people who like to talk about a variety of issues, and the environment is no different. Some will exaggerate claims, some will deny claims and some will overstate claims. People will always say there is a need to do more, and that's probably just the human condition—there always is a need to do more to make our world a better place.

But there are some people who will do something about it. There are some people who will propose a piece of legislation, put it before the House and ask that the House consider it and make improvements and make amendments to see if we can make it better. What I think we have before us today is an intent by the government to address a very important issue in a systematic way that takes into account the economic times we're in, but also takes into account the rise of environmental concerns and some of the alarming health factors we have seen emerge in our society in the past few years.

I certainly hear it on a daily basis from my constituents in Oakville. They tell me that they want and they expect the government in power to take action to reduce these substances and to reduce the potential harm they could cause. Bill 167, in my opinion, is a wonderful way of doing that, and I think it's worthy of the support of all members of the House.

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People in my community, in Oakville—and I'm sure it's no different for any other speaker who has spoken today and will speak later—want to know what types of toxic substances are being emitted in their own neighbourhoods, in their own constituencies; or just when they go to the supermarket and they buy products, for example, they'd like to know what's in that product. You can buy food now—we've become more health-conscious—and you can get the ingredients of that food, the number of calories, whether it has iron in it, whether it has trans fats in it, that type of thing. I think people are starting to say that they would like to see that type of

thing used in the products they buy, too, and I support that.

What Bill 167 would do, if passed, in my opinion—the proposed programs that are contained within the bill are going to help leverage green practices; they're going to spur innovation, I think, in green chemistry alternatives, which is a term that's talked about more and more. It's going to develop new products that we just simply haven't seen on the store shelves today, probably products we couldn't imagine when we were younger, and it's going to create good jobs for Ontarians. The link between business and the economy and green jobs of the future is quite clear in this bill. The need to act on toxics, I think, is very, very clear. It's a case that's made by our constituents, as I said, on a daily basis.

But we also have people who say, "Well, perhaps you can do this differently; perhaps you should be doing it differently." For example, today I had an e-mail that came to me here in the House from Sharon Burns. Sharon is from the region of Halton. She's the unit manager for the cancer society. She looks after the unit that looks after Burlington and Oakville. Sharon has presented some worthy suggestions that I'm sure will be considered as we go through the amendments, if amendments are proposed on this bill as we go through the standing committee phase of the process, which is upcoming.

We've also heard from business. Ian Howcroft, for example, an Oakville constituent of mine, runs the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, a good organization, comes forward with great points, is interested in building the Ontario economy, understands that there's tremendous opportunity in environmental business in the future, and he has come forward with some suggestions that I think also would perhaps become considerations when we go through that time when we examine the bill on a clause-by-clause basis.

Certainly I don't think anybody from the government side has said today—in fact, I think some of the questions that have been raised by the opposition members today have been very good questions, and I think they're questions that we need to consider. I think that should be a model that is typical of any consideration of any bill before this House. I've always been a believer that the opposition parties have something to offer and should be heard from.

Now, sometimes that can be confused with—it's easy to have all the questions and none of the answers. Sometimes, I'll be honest, I'll sit over here on this side and I'll look over at the opposition side and think, "That's great. You ask questions all day long. What are your answers to this? What's your idea for this?" That's what I think the member from Trinity-Spadina was using: When you don't have the answers yourself, the oldest trick in the book is to change the channel. Certainly, as he was trying to change the channel, he made good use of my name and title and asked me if I would address some of the concerns in my remarks, and I plan to do that. I plan to do that as I move through the 20 minutes that I have, and I think I've used up about seven

minutes of that so far, and there will be some time for that in the future.

I think we need to look at the people who have assisted us in this. How did we get to this stage? How did the bill get to the point where now it's in this House and it's being considered by the House? Well, Ontario currently today—and this isn't something we should be proud of; this isn't something that I think our government should be proud of or previous governments that could have done something about it should be proud of—is responsible for the highest release of toxics in Canada and among the highest in all of North America. That's something that I think Ontario citizens, as much as they want a strong economy and they want jobs, would like to see us change. They'd like to see us become a leader in that regard; they'd like to see us become a leader in toxics reduction, and that's what this bill is proposing to do. It's going to take us from where we are, near the bottom of the pile, admittedly, to near or at the top of the pile when it comes to toxics reductions, and I think that's something that all this House should be supporting.

As I said, as the bill moves through the process there may be some changes considered along the way. It may become stronger, in some people's opinions, and I think that's a positive thing. That's how this House is supposed to function. But we definitely need a made-in-Ontario solution, I think, the approach that's going to address the potential threats to our health, safety and quality of life so we can reposition Ontario industries at the leadership point of their ability to compete and succeed in developing the new green economy that we see emerging today in our country and in our province.

The bill was developed—and this is where I want to get to the remarks from the member from Trinity–Spadina—with a large degree of thoughtfulness and a large degree of care, a great deal of consultation across many sectors, and it's been informed to date by the best scientific practices. This is where the member from Trinity–Spadina was asking some questions: “Why didn't you do this? Why didn't you do that?” The Toxics Reduction Scientific Expert Panel, under co-chairs Dr. Miriam Diamond and Professor Lynda Collins, have been very clear. They should be recognized for the great work they've done for this Legislature and for this province. What they have said is, “What we're proposing is a way that works, a way that is going to lead to success.” They're saying, “We're the experts on this.” One of the co-chairs comes from the environmental law field; the other comes from the medical field. What they're proposing is a process that they said they have seen in other leading jurisdictions as being the process that is most successful.

So when member from Trinity–Spadina asks, “Why don't you have hard numbers? Why don't you have targets?”—that, to be honest, was a thought that crossed my mind when I first saw the legislation, because often that is a preferred way to go—the experts to date, and I have spoken to both of them, have been very clear that they're suggesting we go this way because this way

works. They were asked that point blank when I saw them in a media presentation. The media asked them that exact question. They replied, without any hesitation, “If you do it this way, it will work. It will lead to a reduction in toxics in your province. This is what you want to do.”

We've also had the benefit of advice along the way from industry, health, the environmental field, labour, of course, municipal organizations and just ordinary members of the public who are concerned about toxics in our society, who may have had a family member who's become sick, who may have been exposed to toxins in their own lives to date, and simply don't want to see our children exposed to those same toxins in the future.

Let me just reiterate the key elements in our proposed bill and then perhaps I can offer some comments from people who have assisted us and let you know what some other people are saying about the bill to date. The intent of the bill, if we go over a review of what the bill is intended to do, it's going to require facilities that are subject to regulations to track and to report on the toxic substances they use, create and release into the atmosphere. Then, if you are one of these facilities that is under the regulations, you have to come forward then, you're required to develop a plan to reduce toxics and to make a summary of that plan available to members of the general public as to exactly what you're doing as a company, as a corporation or even as a smaller operation, to reduce toxins in our community.

A list of these substances and the substances that concern people the most to date has been proposed by the scientific experts on the Toxics Reduction Scientific Expert Panel, and would be prescribed under draft regulation, should this bill meet the pleasure of the House and be passed. But the bill also includes regulation-making authority that's going to prohibit or regulate the manufacture, sale or distribution of a toxic substance or products that contain it, and it's going to require the manufacturer or the seller or the distributor of that product to provide notice to the public.

The other thing I think people are asking for and want is realistic and legitimate information. They don't want things to be hidden. They don't want claims to be exaggerated. What they want is the real goods; they want the truth on this. So informing Ontarians is another major objective of this bill. People demand, and I think they should be able to demand of their government, to know what's in the environment around them, what's being used in the facilities that make up part of the economy of their community. It helps them to be better informed themselves as citizens, it helps them to make better choices, and it helps them to perhaps make choices about what they buy and what they use in their own house. That's something I think we can all use as a practical example of how we can involve ourselves in the decision-making and make choices that are wise.

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We're also going to establish an electronic reporting system and a website that would help people monitor toxics use and releases in their own community, as well

as the actions that are taken by those facilities, those corporations and those businesses to reduce the toxic load they place on the community they are apart of.

In my own community—I'm sure this applies to many ridings a cross this province—we have a wonderful chamber of commerce. We have a chamber of commerce that I think represents business in a way that businesses in my community are very proud of. It's an organization that's got a growing membership—it's very, very healthy—and they're concerned about the environment as well. People who own businesses have children, they have families and they send their children to schools. Their children play on the playgrounds and use the same toys and products that we all use. People who own businesses aren't any different—this goes back to the spot-the-environmentalist comments I had earlier.

Just because you're a Bay Street lawyer, or just because you're an older or a younger person, or maybe you're a hockey mom or a soccer dad, it doesn't matter: You're concerned about what happens to your family and to your children. The fact that you happen to own a business or that you may be a senior executive in that business really shouldn't come into play. You want to do the safest thing for your community, and I think this bill goes a long way to allowing people in business to find a way to do that.

Some people may ask why Ontario needs to go beyond the measures it currently has. The answer is very clear: What kind of community do you want to live in? In the past, we used to think that only young people cared about the environment; if you were older, you didn't care about the environment. We used to think that business didn't care about the environment, and business people used to think that anything that was done for the environment was going to hurt their business. It was going to hurt their bottom line; it was going to be unprofitable. Those days are gone. That's the old way of thinking; that doesn't apply anymore. We know there is nothing better for good business, for good green jobs in our communities than a strong, clean environment.

So that's clear that we need to do more. We need to do more to reduce toxics. Nobody should be proud of the toxics record of this province today. I think that is a pox on all our houses in the past, perhaps of all of parties. There's nobody who can stand up and say, "We did the right thing at the right time." But I think we can all stand up today and say that this is a good first step; that this sets us on the right road for our quality of life and our health, and to position our industry to take advantage of the competitive opportunities that are offered by the new green economy.

We're building on the current approaches by focusing on what goes into industrial processes. In the past, we have always focused on what comes out—what's coming out the top of the smokestack, what's coming out at the end of the tailpipe. What we're saying in this is, "What's going into the process, and why don't we look at different ways of applying different and safer alternatives to what goes into the process to make this world a healthier place?"

I want to end with some quotes. The first is from the Toronto Environmental Alliance. Katrina Miller, the campaign director, says, "The two laws pair perfectly together, providing the public with the right to know what toxic chemicals are in their neighbourhoods and giving businesses the knowledge and resources they need to reduce pollution. It's so refreshing to see Ontario take a leadership role on toxic chemicals. We should all be proud of that, and it's a great example of how Toronto and Ontario can collaborate to make a difference."

The Canadian Environmental Law Association: "Ontario 'will be the first' jurisdiction in the country to have this kind of a strategy to cut hazardous substances and 'should really be applauded for that'...."

Liz Haugh, president-elect of the Ontario Public Health Association, says, "Today's legislation is a great first step to protecting everyone in Ontario for toxic substances. Ontario Public Health Association congratulates the government of Ontario for their hard work on this issue and looks forward to working with them on the regulations."

I could go on. Someone we all know, Dr. Rick Smith, executive director at Environment Defence, states that, "This is just the kind of innovative, forward-thinking approach we need in Ontario to green our economy and remain competitive in an era when consumers are demanding greener, safer products."

If I can get back to the remarks by the member from Trinity-Spadina, he said, "Why aren't you setting targets for the reductions of toxics?" That was one of the clear questions he asked. I'll tell you what some of the answers are, and I gave you the first answer: It's because the expert panel has told us that this is the way to do it, that this is the way that works. Other jurisdictions have proven that our proposed approach will result in real reductions of toxics use in the province. We wouldn't want to set arbitrary targets and find that they're too low. It seems to me that once these reports are presented, once we have that information, there's nothing to prevent this province, this government or this ministry from actually considering targets at that point in time, and we will be able to set much more accurate and meaningful targets at that time because we'll have a lot more information.

The member from Trinity-Spadina, in his sequence that had all the questions but none of answers, said, "Why are you only targeting certain sectors? Why are you only going to the manufacturing and the mineral processing sector?" The answer is that, combined, they account for the bulk of the emissions. Where else would you go? You wouldn't target a small section; you'd go right to the top sections, to the biggest bulk, to where the problem is. So I hope that helps the member from Trinity-Spadina in some of the information that he has asked for.

But other people have said that this is the way to go. The people who are experts in this field have told us that this is what they want us do. I think this bill is worthy of the support of all members of this House, and I'd encourage all the members who are present here today

and those who are here when the bill is voted on to give their strong support for Bill 167 and bring forward amendments in the future.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill 167. I'm pleased to hear the member from Oakville make reference to opportunities for improvement, because I think that there are two major flaws with the bill as it is proposed that could be drastically improved. If you are truly looking for input and engagement from manufacturers and citizens, it stands to reason that you would include things like actually defining what you are going to include in the bill when referencing toxins and be as specific as possible on which areas are going to be covered off in the plans so that we can actually get that consultation that is necessary.

It's interesting, when you compare what is in the Liberal platform, which said, "to create a tough new toxic reduction law that requires companies that emit toxic pollution to reduce their emissions over time," and yet, with this piece of legislation, there is a section that references writing a plan, but there is no part including a reduction. The reduction becomes the voluntary part; the minister referenced it in his opening comments earlier today.

To me, those are two very large improvements that need to happen with Bill 167: actually defining what you mean by "toxins" and what will be included, and, of course, if you are trying to improve the reduction, then you need to put that in as part of your plan and not just say, "You have to have a plan, and we won't worry about whether you are going to in fact reduce your use at all." I would encourage that public input.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I just heard the rationale that the reason you don't put targets in is because expert panels have indicated that you don't have to have targets in order to be able to achieve the goal. That's a bit of an odd statement, I thought. I've been here for some 20 years, and when I've watched legislation come through the House, there are a couple of ways of coming at it. If you're trying to achieve a certain goal, normally you say, "Here are the targets that we want people to meet within a certain period of time." To have legislation that says that we're going to have people create a plan that demonstrates what they have as far as toxic chemicals within their plants, and not set goals about how to reduce or eliminate them, or identify at least those that are the most dangerous and work with them to be able to replace them with less toxic chemicals, then what's the point?

I guess you can argue that this is not a bad idea. To have the plan at the very least helps them identify, I guess from the government's perspective, what they're using in the plants. Do you think they're not doing that now?

1700

I worked in the mining industry where we operated gold processing mills, and we were using all kinds of

chemicals in those plants. We knew what those chemicals were. The company knew what the inventory was. They knew how much of it they had to buy. They knew what the price was. The workers were trained in the safe use of those chemicals, by and large, sometimes kicking and screaming, but we did it nonetheless. In the end, the companies knew what they were using in their plants. The issue was some of the chemicals may have been able to be replaced with less toxic chemicals to both the environment and the health and safety of workers, and I think that's what we're trying to accomplish here.

It's a step in the right direction. You can't say that this is bad. But certainly to God, there has to be some mechanism in order to have a carrot-and-stick approach or something in order to reduce the amount of toxins that we're using in industry to make it safer for workers and the environment.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. The member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Mr. Rick Johnson: I support Bill 167. Of course, we know that the proposed Toxics Reduction Act would protect health and the environment, position Ontario industries to compete and succeed in the new green economy and inform Ontarians about the toxins that are used in their communities.

We happen to live in one of the most beautiful areas in the world, and I really believe that we need to be so concerned about what kind of a province we're going to leave for our children. This act addresses many of the issues and realizes that the government has a responsibility to create the regulations so that we will leave a better province for our children.

Another thing that I haven't heard mentioned yet today is the need—the honourable member for Timmins-James Bay spoke about the need for having a plan for businesses. We have firefighters all across this province who go into buildings, and having those plans in place will give them the opportunity to know what they're up against when they go in.

My father was a firefighter in the city of Winnipeg, and recently a good friend of mine, Mr. Bob Orr, who was a school trustee in my school board and a retired firefighter, passed away from lung cancer. We lose so many of the firefighters in this province and in this country, and so much of it is because of the chemicals that they were forced to put up with during their careers.

In my area of the city of Kawartha Lakes and Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock we have many rivers. We depend upon our tourism industry. Knowing what's going into our waterways and into the land is so crucial to what we rely on in the tourism industry. So having these regulations in place I think will do great things for the businesses and our communities. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to add some comments to the speech by the member for Oakville on Bill 167, An Act to promote reductions in the use and creation of toxic substances and to amend other Acts.

The member for Timmins–James Bay was talking about his practical experience in the mining industry and he used the terminology that there should be legislation used as a carrot-and-stick approach. That’s exactly what I would say this legislation definitely borrows from the PC election platform from the last election. That was the exact terminology that was actually in our platform. We said that we believe in a toxics reduction plan that uses both carrots and sticks to reduce and eliminate toxic contaminants, and then it went through a list of what should happen.

I would like to advise that I did meet with representatives of the Canadian Cancer Society, local representatives in Parry Sound–Muskoka, Wallie Anderson and Debby Andrews, who are obviously concerned about toxins and their effect on cancer. They have sent recommendations for how they think the legislation could be improved, which I have received. I believe that there’s so much more that can be done just with the general public in terms of what goes down our drains, in particular. People have things around the house and end up just pouring them down the drain, in the garage, down the toilet or whatever. There’s a lot that can be done with the general public to keep things out of our water supply that should not be in our water supply.

I personally have had some private member’s bills that have been aimed at keeping things out of our landfill. For example, I had a deposit return bill for batteries in particular, because so many millions of batteries just end up in the garbage and end up in our landfill sites—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. The member from Oakville has to up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you for the comments from all parties on this. I think deep in everybody’s heart we know that this is the right way to go. Whether we disagree perhaps on the methods, I think we understand that this is what people in Ontario are expecting from their government today. Some people have said that perhaps it’s a little bit too strong, other people have said maybe it’s not strong enough, and that’s not unusual in a debate. I think that’s healthy. It should be expected.

The member from Dufferin–Caledon asked, “What’s the point of a plan if you don’t force businesses to implement the plan?” That, I think, is a fair question. It’s a question, as I think I said in my remarks, that jumped to mind. The answer that we got back from the experts is that based on other jurisdictions—other jurisdictions that perhaps have moved on this ahead of Ontario and that we’re looking to as examples of leadership in this regard—the evidence is very, very clear that mandatory planning and voluntary implementation results in the real reductions. That’s the way to go. That’s what works. I think we’re starting to look at some of the major culprits when we look at some of the substances that are going to be reported in the bill.

But I think it’s important to note that if this bill is passed, we’re going to support an industry that’s going to

need some aid in transforming the way that it does business. We’re prepared to offer a \$24-million investment that’s going to build capacity and address the barriers and bring ideas that should result in toxic reduction into commercial use, and hopefully that technology is exportable.

So I think you can look at this as the right thing to do from an environmental point of view, but from an economic point of view, it’s a very strong investment in our future, our kids’ future, and I hope all members of the House support it.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I was expecting to go a bit later, but this works out just fine. I want, just at the outset, to say clearly that I support the concept of this legislation. I think the idea of making sure that workplaces across Ontario list the type of toxic chemicals that they have within their sites, plants, mills, whatever it might be, is a good idea. I think the concept of making sure that it’s properly listed, that it’s public in some way—there are a number of positive things that could come from that.

One of them was just touched on a little bit earlier by one of the other members, which is that at the very least, I think firefighters who are going in to fight a fire should be aware of what they’re going to be running into and to have some sort of a public registry of what is in that particular plant as far as chemicals and where they’re located and in what concentrations and how much of them are stored etc. It is very useful information for those people who are in emergency services.

So at the very least, that’s a positive thing, and I think on that particular basis, it deserves some merit. The bill certainly does have an ability to provide better information to the public in regard to what type of toxins are within that particular plant, and especially those people who work in emergency services.

On the other hand, on the other side of that is the public’s right to know, and that’s a whole other question. The public should have the right to know what is being utilized in their neighbourhood when it comes to the type of chemicals they use. I mentioned earlier that I come out of the mining industry. I worked in mines and mills across northern Ontario, mostly in the Timmins area, both in asbestos mining and gold and copper mining, and we used a lot of chemicals within those particular plants. The employers knew what they had on site, they knew how much of it, they knew where it was—they had all of that information but that information may not be available to the public because it’s private information.

Again, you get into an interesting debate here. Does the public have the right to know what an employer is utilizing when it comes to toxic chemicals within their plant? I would argue, yes, I think they probably do have the right to know.

For example, in the mining industry, it’s a public resource. We give licence to mining companies to mine gold, copper and other things from underground to process them into a finished, value-added product of

some type. Somewhere along the line, after it's mined, it's got to be milled. After it's milled, it's got to be transported, and eventually it goes to some other processing plant that makes some sort of finished product. I think the public needs to know, because these are public resources, what is being used within those plants when it comes to the type of toxic chemicals that are stored on site. Just the very fact of knowing what is there, I think, is sometimes reassuring, or could cause alarm bells. I understand that may make some employers uncomfortable—and I do understand that, as a person who worked in the mining industry—but I think the public does have a right to know. So having a plan made up by the employer and being forced by legislation to do so is not a bad idea. On that basis, I think there's some merit to this legislation.

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Where I think it really gets difficult for everybody is the issue of why we're not setting targets and goals about what we want to achieve once these plans are done. First of all, the question has to be asked, what are we trying to achieve? Do we just want to make this information public so that people will know, and that's all we're going to do about it? Or is part of the goal trying to find ways to reduce the use of some of these toxins? These toxins, once used in industry, do end up in the groundwater, in the airshed, in our food chain, and as of late all kinds of different carcinogens are now being seen and being experienced by people as a result of what's happened with the pollution of our planet.

So I agree that we need to say, "All right. You're using a chemical in your plant that is a toxin, that is known to be carcinogenic or dangerous in some way." The next question needs to be, "What are you going to do about it?" Are you going to say to the employer, "Close your doors. Don't use these chemicals any more"? That's easy for us to say here at Queen's Park, but if you're the GM auto worker who happens to be working in a paint shop where they are using chemicals, or a mineworker or a forestry worker or a pulp and paper worker, you certainly don't want to see your employer shut down as a result of not being able to use certain toxins.

My point is, we need to be clear on what we want to have happen from these plans. If we're going to develop plans, what are we going to do with them? Is it just so that we can let the public know? I think it's got to go beyond that. I think if it's got to go to, are there are other chemicals that industry could be using that are less harmful to our environment? If that's the case, how do we get the employer to move from using the more toxic chemical that may or may not be more expensive to using a less toxic chemical in the process of whatever it is they're doing in the manufacturing process or the extraction process? How do you get them there? I know that most industrial plants would say today, "God, we can barely afford to keep our doors open. Don't come knocking at our door, throwing added costs on to our processing facility. We're having a hard enough time trying to stay open as it is." Okay, I understand that. Our role as government and our role as society is to ask, "How can we

help you achieve the use of less harmful toxins in your plant?" Clearly, the government has to have some process by which to get them to do that. I think one of the aims of this legislation should be, how do we reduce the emissions of toxins into our atmosphere and watershed? So if that's where we're going, we've got to be very careful about how we get there.

The first problem with this legislation is that we're not even trying to get there. All we're trying to do is post a plan, and we're not setting any targets about how we're going to reduce the toxins being discharged into the atmosphere. I think that's one of the failings of this legislation. It'll be interesting, once we get this bill to committee, to see how many concerned citizens and people from industry and the environmental movement and academia will come before us to talk about that very issue: Should there be a target as far as reduction or elimination of the use of certain toxins? Once you've posted this information to the public, you know what's going to happen. It's like the Environmental Bill of Rights. Once you post something on a registry, people find out about it and then they start to look at what it means. As a result of that clearly transparent process, we're able to learn what's good and what's bad for the environment and we're able to act accordingly in order to, as much as humanly possible, make whatever is happening by way of the application for whatever safer for the environment.

I think the goal should be that we want to reduce the discharge of toxins into our atmosphere. If that's what we're trying to do, then once we've posted these plans, we have to clearly understand what we want to do with these plans once they're posted. Is one of the goals to reduce the toxins being discharged? If the answer is yes, and I think it should be, then how do we get the company to do it? There are a couple of different ways. You can come at it from a stick approach and just say, "We're going to arbitrarily say you can't use certain chemicals, and you've got to adjust in one way or another by a certain date and time."

I can tell you, that's been done in this province before. This is not a new concept. I was a member of the government in 1990 that dealt with the AOX issue within the pulp and paper industry. They were using chemicals that were harmful to the groundwater. Our government said, "We will not allow you to use these AOX chemicals anymore, and we are going to make you withdraw the use of that particular chemical by a certain date."

Industry went wild, I remember, and so did the workers. I remember the CP workers and the steelworkers coming knocking at my door—because I come out of a pulp and paper area as well—saying, "My God, you're going to put us out of business." But we said, "Listen, this stuff is dangerous, and you know as well as we do that there are communities downstream from these plants where people are getting sick from drinking the water coming from that river as a result of the discharge of the plant."

We sat down with industry and we said, "Okay, how can we get you there? First of all, how long do you need

to get there?" Because it's a bit of an arbitrary process. Company A might say, "Well, we need five years," and company B might say, "We need two years," and the government says, "We want it all done within two and a half years." It's an arbitrary process.

But you have to ask the question: If we're trying to eliminate a particular use of a chemical, how long are we going to give people to eliminate the use of that chemical? Secondly, how are we going to do this so that it doesn't put the employer out of work? It's in nobody's interest, if you stop using a particular chemical, that it becomes a financial strain on the company to the point of them closing their doors.

That argument will be made at times. I remember, in the case of the pulp and paper industry, when we eliminated the use of AOX, they made that argument. It was a bit of a bogus argument, to be fair, to be blunt, but there was an argument of costs. We sat down with industry and we said, "Okay, how much time do you need, and what kind of help do you need to get there, to find suitable replacements for these chemicals that you're now discharging into the groundwater?"

Out of that, we did a number of things. There were a whole bunch of investments that were made in northern Ontario, in places like Kapuskasing, Iroquois Falls, Thunder Bay and, I believe, in Sault Ste. Marie as well, and also in Fort Frances, where we went to thermal mechanical pulping, which is a totally different way of breaking down the fibre from the tree to make the paper. We were using AOX chemicals in order to break down the fibre in digesters by way of putting them through a woodroom, handling them through and then using digesters to break that all apart, using those chemicals. We decided that one of the answers was to go to TMP process—very expensive to get into, on the capital side, but once you've done the investment, it saves you money in the longer run because, (a) it's a more efficient way of breaking down the fibre so that the company can save money in the long run, and (b) it's a much less harmful process for the environment, because you don't need to use AOX chemicals in the process of breaking up the fibre and turning it into pulp.

We approached it and said, "Okay, let us help you financially to make those investments necessary," to build the TMP plants across northern Ontario that were necessary to change the process by which we broke down fibre into paper. I think it is one of the reasons that the industry survived, to a certain extent.

Yes, I remember: They were knocking on our doors. I remember them coming here from Abitibi, from Domtar and different places. I remember. I was a parliamentary assistant in Northern Development and Mines, and I was one of the people who had to deal with this on committee. It wasn't on committee, but within cabinet committee, because it was part of a cabinet committee discussion. I remember that they were knocking on our doors. They were saying, "This is going to bankrupt us." So we had to say, "Okay, everybody, calm down. Hold it a second. Calm down. We hear your argument. We, as a

government, understand there's going to be a cost associated with you not using AOX, but what we're prepared to do is to sit down with you and go through how we replace the use of AOX with something that's more benign to the environment."

We worked on it for some time, and eventually we came up with a whole bunch of different things, including the use of TMP as a process for breaking up fibre. As a result, those companies reduced their fibre handling costs within their plants. It actually saved them money. So we did something that was good for the environment and the employer, and at the end it was good for the employees in those communities, because those employers were made stronger, they were able to negotiate better collective agreements, and the municipalities in which these plants operated benefited from the economic spinoff that came out of this.

So there is a way of moving from harmful, toxic chemicals to using less toxic, less harmful chemicals, or to the elimination thereof. It's a question of, first of all, do we have the will? Is that where we want to go? And that's the question we have to ask ourselves in this debate: Are we wanting to get rid of some of these chemicals? I think the answer should be yes.

1720

Let's understand that it's going to be tough to get there, because it is going to cost industry money. So we need to say as a Legislature, "Okay, let's not throw this all on the hands of industry and on their backs, because they've been allowed to use these chemicals for all these years." It was the province that allowed them to use them in the first place. All of a sudden, we're changing the game. Well, if we change the game, we've got to mitigate the damage in some way.

That's the second part of what we need to set as a goal if we're going to eliminate—if one of goals, once you've done the plan, is to eliminate or reduce the use of toxins, what are we going to do as a province in order to assist industry to get there so that it doesn't cost them so much money that it puts a strain on their business? Because at the end of the day, we need those jobs, but we also need to protect the environment. So there's a cost. So what we save as far as harm to the environment—yes, it might be by spending some money upfront or money to change over a process, as we did with TMP, but at the end, the benefit is enormous. It's a question of saving the environment.

As a result of the reduction of AOX—there are entire communities in northern Ontario that have seen I think a healthier lifestyle as a result of the elimination of AOX, certainly amongst First Nations communities that really relied on the river system as a source of food and water.

I look back at the mining industry—another example. I worked in the mining industry, where all kinds of chemicals were being used as a result of needing to process gold or copper out of the slurry that is made through the milling process when you mine it. Again, you can't get around it: You've got to use these chemicals. There are chemicals that have got to be used to allow you

to process whatever it is you're trying to take out of the ore. The question becomes, are some of these chemicals dangerous to the environment? If the answer is yes—and I think there will be some yeses—then we've got to ask ourselves the question, "What are we going to do in order to get there?"

Again, I think we've got to ask the question. Yes, do the plans; and two, what do we want to do when the plans are done? Once you've asked that second question, then there's probably about three or four things that come after—and I spoke about one, which is the elimination of harmful toxins in the atmosphere.

But the other thing is, what do you do with those who don't want to comply? Nobody wants to talk about it in this debate, but I think you have to. If our goal as a Legislature is to make our environment safer by eliminating the use of toxins, it then stands to reason that if there is an employer out there who is reluctant and unwilling to come to the table to figure out how we stop the use of dangerous toxins in that process, we need to have a mechanism to say, "We'll get you at the table, or else we'll fine you. We'll do something to get your interest so that you're here at the table negotiating with us."

Part of the problem that I guess I have with this legislation is that I support the concept of what they're trying to do. I say to the government across the way, "Congratulations. Good idea. I don't have a problem with the idea, and I don't have a problem saying it's a good idea. Congratulations." But what I'm hearing is a lack of will to do anything as far as the second and the third step in the process. We really need to ask ourselves those questions, so I'm going to be looking forward to what members have to say here in this debate and what the public has to say when it comes to their presentations before this committee about whether this bill really gets us to where we want to go.

Then there's a whole other issue around labelling that we haven't even talked about yet. Should this legislation more properly deal with how you label chemicals that are being used not only within industry but in our everyday lives, in our daily living? There are all kinds of chemicals that we use that we think are benign. It's out there, it's advertised; we've seen it advertised on TV 15 times a week, and you see it on the shelf at the store, but this stuff is dangerous for you, and if not used properly, you really can get in a lot of trouble. We're not just talking about prescription stuff; we're talking about average household chemicals that you use within your home or that you use in cooking, in some cases.

I say again, there's a whole other issue around labelling. Yeah, I understand that for industry, this is a real leap, but I think we need to remember that industry, as society has progressed over the years, and things that industry would have thought were absolutely impossible 30 years ago when it comes to changing their way of doing things—in some cases, they had to be brought in kicking and screaming, but they'll be the first to turn around and say now, "That was the best thing we ever did."

I'll give you a quick little example. Again, I come out of the mining industry. When we, as steelworkers, suggested that there should be an Occupational Health and Safety Act that gave—can you believe—the right to refuse to a worker, that a worker could stand up in the plant by the force of law and say to his or her employer, "I refuse this work because it's unsafe," and have the legal right to do so, and if the employer retaliated, the worker had the right to be protected by the law—I remember when we did that some 30 years ago. I was one of the steelworkers who was working and advocating for that where I came from.

Employers were absolutely over the end. They were livid. They couldn't believe that steelworkers were out there talking about that. They got even madder when this Legislature started talking about it, and they really got peeved when the Legislature passed the legislation and every worker in province got the right to refuse. They said it was a calamity; it was going to be the end of industry as we know it, that we were going to have these shutdowns; nothing would operate any more because you couldn't trust those workers to have that kind of authority to refuse unsafe work.

Listen to the Ontario Mining Association today, listen to the Ontario Forest Industries Association today. They talk about safety. Those are the first words out of their lips, because they now understand a safer workplace means you spend less money. It's not only the most human thing to do as far as preventing injury to workers, but it's also a question of the bottom line. So I look at the mining industry today and I drive around plants across Ontario, and you see how many days are worked safe without an accident: "We're the safest of this, and we have a safe record here, and we've got a safe record there," because they finally understood that, yes, it was a leap of faith for them to accept that workers would have the right to refuse, but in the end, they saved money. Their workers' compensation premiums went down. They were not having the kind of problems in the workplace that disrupted the workplace as a result of accidents that were happening back then. Now we can boast in the mining industry that we're actually the safest industry. This is amazing. I can't believe it. I would have never said that 30 years ago, but mining is among the safest industries in Ontario to work with in the manufacturing process.

So, yes, it's a leap of faith if we decide to set goals of eliminating the use of toxins in plants, and, yes, it's going to be a tough thing to do, but it's doable. We've done it before, and I think we should not lose the opportunity to do what is right for workers, for families and for our environment in this province, and for business as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm delighted to comment on Bill 167 today, the Toxics Reduction Act. As we've been discussing, what this act would do is require businesses that use toxins to, first of all, inform their communities about what toxins are in use and then file a plan, which

would be public, that would outline how they're planning to reduce the toxins. That gives a great deal of flexibility, which is a good thing because in Ontario we have such a diverse province, such a diverse economy. It's very difficult to identify chemicals that are used in the mining industry versus forestry versus manufacturing in a whole host of forms, versus the service industry. Each of those industries has different issues, different products and different toxins that need to be reduced. What this does is allow each company to have a tailor-made bill.

But I think one of the other things that we're seeing today is the whole issue around a sustainable economy. In fact, we had in Guelph a few months ago a workshop on sustainable economy. One of the things that we looked at in those workshops, as we worked through the day and listened to various speakers, was the whole issue of the double bottom line and the notion that it's often useful for companies to look at their green footprint, their green bottom line. In fact, it's becoming more and more a case that companies that can present to the public a positive green bottom line, a plan to reduce their impact on the environment, are those that are becoming most profitable, because they have consumers.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. The member for Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to enter the debate today on Bill 167, the Toxins Reduction Act, 2009. No doubt every member in this chamber, of course, understands that in this Legislature we need to be part of working on reducing the impact of toxins on people and our environment.

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I'm hopeful that the government, with this attempt, isn't resorting to duplication of what the federal government is already doing. As you know, the federal government has already developed what many in this world consider to be a world-class chemical management plan. It's referred to in an acronym called CMP, which is governed by the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, CEPA, and has a well-known approach to deciding what chemicals need to be assessed and a rapid and aggressive timetable for doing those assessments, and then developing regulations as required. So I'm just hopeful that in recognizing that we must adhere to the CMP, that we would further ensure that toxics identification for potential reductions is based on a sound science- and risk-based process. It is important that we avoid regulatory duplication and that we minimize any added costs in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: The member for Timmins–James Bay, as he is wont to do, discussed the mining industry and some of the relevance for the mining industry of this proposed legislation, Bill 167. As we all work on this and strive for a piece of legislation and the regulation that follows, we strive for something that will be effective in reducing toxics. That will be a challenge for the mining industry and for the smelting industry. I don't know the

industry as well as the member for Timmins–James Bay, but how do you substitute some of the products that are used in mining as we accrue metal from the ground?

I am concerned that this may not be the way to go as far as the mining industry—and I ask northern Ontario to look well to this piece of legislation. Why on earth would we religiously follow a 20-year-old state of Massachusetts piece of legislation? Massachusetts, to my knowledge, does not have a mining industry. Twenty years ago, Massachusetts did not have a mining industry, when this law was written. However, we do know in the discussion paper that at a future date—and I'll just quote: "Given that the toxics used and generated by these facilities"—referring to mining—"at a future date ... a specialized approach to managing and mitigating those risks where appropriate" is being considered. I do have a concern with that.

Again, this legislation was written for a New England state. There's no mining there, and I don't know how you can apply that to northern Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Questions and comments?

Mr. Reza Moridi: I have the pleasure of participating in the discussions about Bill 167, the Toxics Reduction Act, 2009.

The introduction of this bill falls within the general policy of this government, where we have, for example, made commitments to eliminate production of electricity using coal, because coal produces toxic materials and introduces them into the environment. More recently, we passed a bill in this House banning smoking in cars where they have a child under 16 years old in the car. So these are toxic materials, and toxic materials, as the name implies, are toxic. They affect the health and safety of people.

In Ontario we have over 23,000 toxic materials that are used in various industries, and some of these toxic materials are carcinogens, meaning that they introduce and induct cancer. Other ones have other health effects. So the introduction of this bill is mainly directed to the fact that we want to protect the health and safety of Ontarians.

In reality, in Ontario we are one of the largest jurisdictions in North America and in this country, where we release more toxic materials, so we need to stop this, basically. This is the right time to bring this bill together and pass it through this House to get these toxic materials banned in Ontario.

The technology is there today. In eliminating toxic materials, we can replace them with other chemicals which are not toxic, and this bill, if passed, will create research and development not only in academic institutions but in industry as well. Therefore, it will create jobs for researchers and engineers who will bring up chemicals with acceptable and approved health and safety aspects.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): The member from Timmins–James Bay has up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I thank all the members for commenting, but I would just hearken, on the last comment

that was just made now, that this legislation will cause all kinds of research to happen. There's not going to be any research happening if all you've got is legislation that says, "You've got to make a plan." What is the incentive to get the switch? How are you going to move people from using a toxic chemical to a less toxic chemical if you don't have a mechanism to say, "Our goal is to eliminate, over a period of time"—whatever toxins they might be? At the end of the day, I don't think just having a plan is going to do a whole lot towards reducing the emissions that we now have going into the atmosphere and into the environment.

I say again, the legislation is not a bad idea. I support the general concept, but I tell you, there's a real problem with legislation that says, "We don't know what we want to do once we have all this information." You're going to have these plans, with no goal about what you do with these plans once you find out what toxins people are using in industry. I understand this is a tough issue on both sides. For me as a consumer, I want to be protected. I want to make sure that I'm not getting sick as a result of being exposed to whatever. As a worker, you want to know the same thing. The company wants to know that whatever happens, they're going to be able to afford to do it and that it's not going to be an onerous financial burden on them. For the environmentalists, they understand just how important it is that we do this right.

I say to the government across the way: Okay, great. You've got a piece of legislation in the House. Good idea. I'll give you some support for that, but once you get this thing into committee, we've got to start figuring out what we want to achieve once this legislation is passed. If we're going to post plans that say, "Here are the toxins in industry," we need to then decide what we're going to do with those plans. Is the goal to eliminate some of the harmful toxins? Is the goal to replace them with other means, either different chemical or mechanical means? I don't know, but those are the questions we have to ask, and if we don't do that, we're giving this short shrift.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Further debate?

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 167, the Toxics Reduction Act, 2009. The member from Timmins-James Bay was raising some good questions, as were the other members on both sides of the House. This is why second reading debate is important. It got me to ask some questions of our researcher too. That helps me be better informed, because this is a complex issue.

One of the key things that the member from Timmins-James Bay should know is that as part of this commitment that we make in legislation, the government is also going to invest \$24 million to help Ontario's industries comply with new rules, transform their processes, find green chemistry alternatives and reduce the use of toxics in their operations. So there is a very proactive approach by government, along with the legislation, to help these industries develop a plan of how they would be able to audit what they use, how they would be able to get

information on alternative chemicals, perhaps, that aren't as harmful or to get away from certain chemicals that are harmful. So there is an inducement there through government partnership and this fund that's going to be set up to help industries comply.

The other thing that this legislation really depends on is public education, and that's education not only of the general public but of our industrial chemical producers. It asks them to propose a plan and monitoring of the chemicals they use and to put forth a strategy on how to reduce these chemicals, because right now, there is really no planned approach to this. Companies do it on an ad hoc basis, and some of the good companies are already doing it, but across the board, they're not doing it because, as the minister said, when it comes to toxic chemicals and the discharge and use of toxic chemicals, Ontario is one of the worst in North America.

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So I disagree with the Conservatives that we should do nothing. We have to do something. The federal government has their approach, but the problem with the federal government approach is that all they're doing is assessing 200 chemicals out of 23,000. They're not even going to eliminate the 200 chemicals; all they're going to do is assess 200 chemicals out of 23,000, and they're not going to complete the assessment federally until the year 2012. We can't wait on that very laissez-faire approach of the federal government when we know full well that we've got some pretty frightening cancer statistics in this country and province.

Despite the fact that so many breakthroughs have been made in the treatment of cancer and the new breakthrough drugs, the incredible research that has been done, the work by Cancer Care Ontario and the amount of dollars that are spent in treating cancer and educating people about cancer, the cancer rates in this province and in this country are still on the rise. Doesn't that give you a bit of a wake-up call to shake our heads here, that there's something wrong in the things we eat, in the air we breathe, in what's in our water? There's got to be something we're doing wrong, and I think we owe it to our children and we owe it to our grandchildren to make sure that we investigate every possible source of this growing epidemic of cancer.

How many hundreds of billions of dollars have we spent dealing with cancer in the last decade—\$100 billion, \$200 billion, maybe \$300 billion in North America? Yet cancer rates are still on the rise. That's why the Canadian Cancer Society, Cancer Care Ontario and these organizations that are very concerned about people's health are saying that we need to look at reducing toxins that are used in our daily lives. It's not as if this legislation tries to use a dictatorial approach to industry. These are suggested strategies; they're not even mandated. I know one of the criticisms made by the New Democratic Party is that it should be stronger and going further, to have these goals and specific criteria. But I don't think the laissez-faire approach of Conservatives is really going to be accepted by the public in Ontario.

We already saw what happened—just a small example; this bill doesn't deal with consumer products. We saw that product that they put in baby bottles—

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Bisphenol A.

Mr. Mike Colle: Bisphenol A. It was put in baby bottles and the lining of canned food. Those hard plastic bottles have got this cancer-causing agent, and flew off the shelves when mothers found out that this product could be harmful to children.

You can see why in the long run, it's not only beneficial to our children that these products are not produced with these hazardous chemicals but for the industry that's in the business of producing baby bottles or the lining for canned goods. If they knew that these chemicals were harmful—it's bad for the bottom line. That's the kind of education that is required to help business and to help industry get away from the use of these hazardous toxic materials that will not only contribute to people's ill health—it will also save them money, because they're not going to be selling too many baby bottles now. I know my daughter has gone to the glass bottles. We threw out all those plastic baby bottles. It scared the wits out of everybody.

This is an example of what happens when we don't have a thorough, comprehensive monitoring program, an education program, and an involvement by government and by scientists in monitoring the chemicals that are used in Ontario 24/7 in all kinds of industry. As I said, right now there's basically an ad hoc approach to this. We need a more systemic approach, and that's what this bill does. It sets a benchmark, it sets up a process of co-operative engagement of the industry so they can start to phase out some of these chemicals that perhaps, in the EU, in Europe, they found to be harmful; they're being withdrawn from many EU countries, and we should also be withdrawing them here, based on a process of education and partnership. That's what this bill sets up, as I said, even putting forth \$24 million to help industries comply with the new rules and the processes, which are not binding.

Now, you can imagine that many people would say that it should be obligatory and there should be strict rules and elimination. But at least we are setting up these protocols, which, according to the panel that was set up earlier last year, is the best approach, a co-operative partnership approach. That's what the minister has undertaken to do.

It's very obvious, too, that reducing reliance on toxics enables facilities to help reduce their business risks and business costs, by mitigating the need for mandatory pollution controls. If you use those killer chemicals, you're going to have to use all kinds of pollution controls and mitigating measures to control the pollutants, so it's going to cost you money. Then you've got to do all kinds of extra things, as the member from Timmins-James Bay was saying, in handling all these hazardous chemicals, which is going to cost you more. Then there are the remediation liabilities. The lawyers love this kind of stuff. Insurance costs, when you're using these chemi-

icals, go up—more money to the bottom line of the company. Not to mention—you know, I don't have to say the words "Love Canal." We're not too far from what happened at Love Canal in Buffalo—a toxic soup in a whole section of that part of Buffalo because nobody was supervising or paying attention to the toxic chemicals being dumped into that canal for years and decades in Buffalo. We're not that far from that, and it wasn't too long ago that that happened.

So we are going to stand here and say, "Well, perhaps we shouldn't go this far, given this is a remote possibility in industry and the federal government is doing this plan to monitor 200 chemicals out of 23,000"? I don't think that's good enough. We have seen the suffering that occurred to our neighbours in the south when they weren't monitoring the use of these chemicals being dumped.

The member from Peterborough was talking about what happened in his region, in Peterborough, with the Trent Canal, with Canada Packers dumping all that waste into the—what's that lake called?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Little Lake.

Mr. Mike Colle: Little Lake, beautiful, pristine Little Lake on the Trent Canal system. That's because we didn't know better at that time. So now we have better information and we listen to the practical scientists who know what can be done.

I think there's mention here about one thing I was going to ask the minister. He mentioned the use of alternative green chemicals, and I thought, "That's maybe an oxymoron." Is there such a thing as a green chemical? I don't know. But anyway, I'll ask him for an explanation.

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Colle: Maybe organic worms or organic microbotics or whatever—

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Colle: Yes, I think of worms eating up our household waste. Anyway, green chemicals—I don't quite understand that. I have to ask the minister about that.

I think what the minister was trying to say is, they're trying to have alternative chemicals that are not as harmful and not as toxic certainly as the ones we use. That's possible, because I think there's enough information that could be shared with our friends all over the world who are facing the same issues. As we know full well, Canada and Ontario are not alone in this incredible challenge that we have. I know that there are countries all over the world, again, faced with these same dire circumstances, and I think we need to work together internationally on this front, too.

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The other aspect of this bill which is very, very important is that in the long run it also tends toward greener industries, more sustainable industries, more sustainable practices, because that is what the public is demanding. The new standard is that there needs to be an investigation of using less harmful products in our industry and in everything that we do. As consumers, we obviously

have a role to play in that. We sometimes don't think of the consequences of consumer buying patterns, and that's why we have a role to play within it.

I know the minister has gone out of his way to produce a series of pieces of legislation which are, part and parcel, very compatible with what he's done here. We know that the source water protection act is critically important, the Greenbelt Protection Act—we had the proclamation just last week of the important Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act.

I don't know if they did this in Timmins-James Bay, but I can remember in downtown Toronto, on College and Grace, back in the 1950s, all the guys would have their 1957 Chevys and the 1952 Fords and they would be parking them on the side of the curb with two wheels up. The member from Timmins-James Bay wouldn't understand this, but I know the member from Peterborough understands this. You'd park with two wheels up on the sidewalk and you'd have two wheels down on the road. You'd say, "Well, what is that guy doing there?" The member from Haldimand-Norfolk probably knows, but he doesn't—no, he's from the farm. He wouldn't know this. You know what they were doing? They were doing oil changes, and the oil would be going down into the sewer, into the grate. This was done on Saturdays all over the city of Toronto. They'd undo the nut on the bottom. Mr. Rinaldi, an old car junkie from way back, knows. He probably did it back on Dufferin and Dupont, where he lived. And we didn't—

Interjection.

Mr. Mike Colle: Nobody even told us. We thought we were doing the proper thing for our cars. We couldn't afford an oil change. Going to a gas station for an oil change was quite prohibitive, so you'd go to Canadian Tire and get the oil and then get underneath and unscrew the bolt and let all the oil drip out into the sewer. There was no awareness about that. The general public just didn't have that kind of information. We were basically unaware of the fact that that oil ended up in Lake Ontario and that's where our drinking water came from. No wonder, by 1965, 1967, most of Lake Ontario became unswimmable. Back in the 1950s, you would swim at Sunnyside Beach, you would swim at Cherry Beach. You could go all summer long. People would be swimming and using that lake water. By the mid-1960s, you would not dare swim in Lake Ontario and you wouldn't go near the islands: Centre Island, Hanlan's Point, Ward's Island. You couldn't swim there because of all this dumping.

There used to be a lot of industry up and down the Don River. A lot of factories would be along the Don River and along the Humber River. There would be all kinds of industrial uses along those two rivers. They would be throwing auto parts, in fact—I remember because there's quite a steep incline, especially from the Humber—and waste from junk cars into the Humber River. The Humber River and the Don River were basically writeoffs. But in the 1980s and the 1990s, we became more attuned to the impact we had on our environment. In fact, if you go to the Humber River right

now—and the member from Timmins-James Bay has gone salmon fishing in Lake Ontario. He knows. He eats the salmon and he's done it for many years. You can catch, what, 30-pounders?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I got a 33-pounder.

Mr. Mike Colle: The member from Timmins-James Bay got a 33-pounder in Lake Ontario. You can eat the fish, catch the fish; in fact, if you go up the Humber River near James Gardens and Baby Point in September, you'll see 30-pound salmon making their way up the Humber River to spawn at the headwaters. That's the improvement that has occurred.

I know Florence McDowell and Madeleine McDowell and that family has had this incredible program to educate people about rejuvenating the Humber River valley, and it's coming back. The Don River is a little more difficult because there's not as much water flow and there's still difficulty. You're not going to see salmon in the Don River. Anyway, there certainly are salmon in the Humber River. Right in the middle of Toronto, you'll see, as I said, 30- to 40-pound salmon bravely trying to make it upriver to spawn. That's because of leadership, education and more information.

You may disagree with the philosophy of government intervening or regulating or doing this, but this is more than just government stepping in because government wants to. There's an imperative for government to do this, and the imperative is really a health one. This is the health of our citizens in all of our ridings, and we're all connected, whether it be those of us who have ridings in the city of Toronto, ridings along Lake Erie or Lake Ontario or the Trent River system. We depend on each other and each other's actions impact on our own people.

The government of Ontario is trying to put together—basically, this is like a massive, comprehensive education campaign in partnership with industry, and industry in the long run will benefit because there will be some cost reductions and there will be some more efficiencies. The time has come to do this, and hopefully we can, through debate in this committee—I know the member from Haldimand-Norfolk asked a good question about why it was only Massachusetts doing it. Those are the kinds of questions we should be looking at and examining to see if we can come up with a good piece of legislation so we'll know better, so industry will know better and be better informed. It's critical. Just look at our cities and our children and their need to have this done for their sake.

I'm just trying to say that it's something that is necessary. I don't think it's too onerous on industry, and it makes us all undertake a self-evaluation of how we should be doing things better and improving our environment. Thank you very much.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Cheri DiNovo): Thank you. It being close to 6 o'clock, this House stands recessed until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1758.

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Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of International Trade and Investment / Ministre du Commerce international et de l'Investissement
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Smitherman, Hon. / L'hon. George (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Énergie et de l'Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Small Business and Consumer Services / Ministre des Petites Entreprises et des Services aux consommateurs
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Watson, Hon. / L'hon. Jim (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	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 officielle Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Tim Hudak
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Garfield Dunlop
Gilles Bisson, Bob Delaney
Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Tim Hudak, Amrit Mangat
Phil McNeely, Yasir Naqvi
John O'Toole
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Présidente: Julia Munro
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Michael A. Brown, Howard Hampton
Rick Johnson, Lisa MacLeod
Gerry Martiniuk, Julia Munro
David Ramsay, Lou Rinaldi
Liz Sandals
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Christine Elliott
Peter Kormos, Jeff Leal
Dave Levac, Reza Moridi
Lou Rinaldi, John Yakabuski
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jerry J. Ouellette
Laura Albanese, France Gélinas
Ernie Hardeman, Phil McNeely
Jerry J. Ouellette, Liz Sandals
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Laurel C. Broten, Kim Craitor
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Helena Jaczek, Shafiq Qaadri
Khalil Ramal, Peter Shurman
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Select Committee on Elections / Comité spécial des élections

Chair / Président: Greg Sorbara
Howard Hampton, Greg Sorbara
Norman W. Sterling, David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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