



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 39^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 17 November 2010

Mercredi 17 novembre 2010

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 17 novembre 2010

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 16, 2010, on the motion relating to time allocation on Bill 172, An Act to amend the Ticket Speculation Act / Projet de loi 172, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le trafic des billets de spectacle.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's a pleasure to continue the debate; I was looking forward to finishing my time.

I was saying yesterday that I am really a supporter not so much of the bill as of the debate on the bill, because I think it's a good one. I was saying yesterday that "speculation," part of the title given to it, is a big part of this problem. Whether the government addresses it or not is the question. That's why my colleague from Welland said we need full debate in committee, and I'll get to that in the latter part of my comments.

I want to talk about the problem. In my mind, there are two little problems. One little problem is the issue of affordability. People can barely afford the tickets now.

We're just talking about above board ticket sales in terms of what people now have to pay to get in to see a Raptors game. It's fascinating. I appreciate the fact that my colleague from Welland got these little sheets that show us the kinds of prices people pay. The top price to see a Toronto Raptors game is \$1,120.

Mr. Peter Kormos: How many seats?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: How many seats? It's court-side, row A—

Mr. Peter Kormos: One seat.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: One seat. How many seats—

Mr. Peter Kormos: It should buy 20 seats.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The member from Welland is saying that for \$1,120, presumably you're going to get a whole row of tickets, right? It's one ticket.

Who has that kind of money except the big shots? These people can afford it. They love to go to the game and just throw their money away. That's part of it. I understand.

At the low end, there are a lot of rows here—Peter, did you see this? There's courtside, row B, \$585; courtside, row C, \$510—affordable, isn't it?—side prime, \$240; side, \$175; baseline prime, \$145; baseline \$110; dynamic side \$80. You get the picture, right? These are very expensive tickets.

We're talking about good working men and women with their children going to watch a game. They have to pay these extraordinarily unaffordable prices. This is on a good day, on a regular day, to go to a game.

Nobody talks about affordability. The government says this bill is about fairness. They didn't talk about the fact that the prices people currently pay to go and see a game are just out of reach for the majority of people who would like to go. But men and women go because, first of all, they like basketball or hockey and, secondly, because their children drive them to the games.

Children are a powerful tool. That's why marketers spend billions and billions of dollars in Canada, the US and Europe—all over the world—to entice young men and women to do things that, under ordinary circumstances, they might not want to do. When you persuade kids that they need to go and see a hockey game, their parents are but puppets to the child's wishes—marketing and marketers are a powerful drive—and they'll go no matter what the price is. But at the moment, prices are unaffordable.

To see Lady Gaga is \$191. There are a lot of people who like Lady Gaga. You look at these people and say, "Good God! Why would you pay that kind of money?" But there are people who love to see these entertainers—God bless—191, 200 bucks a pop. Imagine the allure such people have that they would bring these young women—most of them are young; some are older, but most are young—to pay that kind of money. I'm aghast at this Gaga show. But that's okay. It's entertainment. Unaffordable—200 bucks. People will go because marketing is a powerful tool and they will get there.

I say that the way to get prices down is to boycott these entertainers and the entertainment industry. Boycott the heck out of them until prices go down. We should be picketing from one end of Ontario to the other. If we did that, prices would become affordable. Twenty bucks for Lady Gaga? Okay, 20 bucks is good for me; I might go. Twenty-five bucks? Okay, I might go.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Thirty?

0910

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Now we're stretching it, right? But when you get to \$200—people are nuts; people are crazy to be persuaded to go and see these entertainers

for that kind of price. Who else do we have? Oh yes, Justin Bieber. He's a bit cheaper: \$61 Canadian. But he's going to get there. Eventually he's going to get there.

We're talking about prices for concerts or sports being out of reach for the majority of men and women who might want to go and see these people or see these games. The government doesn't deal with that. They will argue, "Well, that's not part of what this bill is about." Okay, what are they dealing with? By the way, the price of concert tickets in the US, as we know, has gone up 61% in the last five years; I just wanted to give that stat as a way of understanding how high prices are going.

The second part of it is that what the government is trying to do is deal with the resale market. Part of the problem was that people were complaining that Ticketmaster was diverting buyers to the TicketsNow site, the resale organization from which they got money. Now, there was a debate last week when we talked in this chamber about whether or not there is collusion, and people got really nervous with the word "collusion." I said that I thought there is collusion. But even if there wasn't collusion, is there a related connection of the two? If you direct tickets to another organization that resells them and you get some money back, are they related? You bet your boots they are. Is it collusion? Let's leave it for the lawyers to decide. These are terms that are complex and legal in nature. We'll leave it to them to decide. But are the two of them related? Absolutely.

This bill attempts to deal with that. Okay. Does it solve it? The problem is, it doesn't. Why? Because you've got brokers in Toronto and outside of Toronto who use the computer system to access as many tickets as they want, pick them up and resell them. Does the bill deal with that?

Mr. Jeff Leal: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Jeff from Peterborough, it doesn't deal with that. That's what my friend from Wellingham is saying. We need hearings and we need lots of them. We need to bring people to talk about how we can make this bill better. And what does the government do? It gives two little days, a couple of hours on each, to bring people to committee to discuss this, in my mind, very important bill.

I know that some of my Conservative friends—brothers and sisters—said, "This is a useless bill. Move on. There are more important things." This is an important bill to debate. This is an issue of affordability. This is an issue of ordinary folks—men and women—who want to go to sports events, who want to go to concerts and can't afford it, and then are subject to the resale market, the uncontrollable avarice of resale marketeers, brokers who fleece those who are willing to fork out the money.

Mr. John O'Toole: Rosario, you're going over the top.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Member from Durham, no, no. We're not. We're talking about people from Oshawa—your people—who like to go to these concerts and sports activities, and you're telling them that this bill is useless? No. This bill can be useful if we make it so.

That's why we need to embarrass the government, not so much because they're curtailing debate on this bill today but because they're curtailing the number of days they're giving so that people can come and speak to this bill. A couple of hours on two days is all you're giving. That is the shameful nature of the debate today, not so much that your bill doesn't do as much but what it could do if you allowed it to do the proper job. How could you shamefully accept your House leader or the Premier's—

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Rosie, it hurts.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Well, that was introduced by you, mon amie—perhaps directed by a stronger hand; I'm not sure—to limit the number of days that we would be able to invite people and allow them the opportunity to speak to this bill and allow them the opportunity to recommend amendments that could make this bill a little better. How could you be so happy to do so little each and every time that you're given this opportunity? How could you be so happy with so little? That's the Liberal way. It's amazing.

I think we've had enough on this bill for the day. I'm not sure we have been able to embarrass the government around the issue of curtailment of hearings, but we've done our best, those of us who have spoken to this bill, and I suppose it's time to move on.

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

In that case, Ms. Smith has moved government notice of motion number 33. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Pursuant to standing order 9(c), the vote will be deferred until after question period today.

Vote deferred.

IMMIGRANT SERVICES

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 28, 2010, on the amendment to the motion relating to negotiations with the federal government on a comprehensive new agreement to provide funding, planning and governance for immigrants to succeed and for Ontario to prosper.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: Nearly two months ago, I was standing here talking about this motion, put forward by the honourable minister, relating to immigration and immigration levels, seeking funds for the province of Ontario. The government has seen fit, after more than two months—and that was the first day of debate—to bring the matter back. I'm wondering why. I am absolutely flabbergasted, if it was so important two months ago that this motion be passed in terms of the ongoing dialogue with the federal government, that it's taken two months to bring it back. Notwithstanding that, I still have 41 minutes left on my speech, and I intend to use them today.

On the last occasion, I had an opportunity to outline the abysmal failure of the Ontario government, this one for the past seven years, and governments before which have chosen to do absolutely nothing within their mandate around the issues of immigration.

In 1978, as I outlined on the last occasion, the government of Quebec sat down and negotiated An Act respecting immigration to Quebec—as I outlined the last time, the British North America Act gives all provinces that right; in fact, every province has a Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, just as the federal government has a Minister of Citizenship and Immigration—and it is one of only two joint jurisdictions, as set out in the British North America Act, 1867.

Quebec has seen fit to do the wise, just and honourable thing with their immigrants, and Ontario, which has taken the lion's share of immigrants over all of those years, has chosen to do absolutely nothing except go, cap in hand, once in awhile, as this motion is saying, to say, "Please, sir, give us some money so we can deal with the flood of immigrants who come to Ontario every year. But, no, no, we don't want to help choose them. We don't want to help them integrate in any real, meaningful way like Quebec does. We don't want to have our own grid system to choose the immigrants who are best for Ontario. We don't want to do all the things that Quebec does and expects to do."

That's what I talked about the last time. I encourage anyone who wants to see that to go back and look at the transcript of September 28.

In reality, what this minister is asking for is not enough. Surely, in this time of economic turmoil, we have to do more with the skills and abilities we have.

0920

In the interim, in those two months that I waited to finish this speech, the government, to no fanfare at all and in a foreign place, announced that they were going to give some \$30 million to bring 75 foreign students, the best and the brightest, here to Ontario. I don't really have too much umbrage with that. I know that there have been some tough questions in this House. But you know, what about the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who have come to this province in the last number of years who already are the best and the brightest, who have already come with amazing credentials—doctors and lawyers and nuclear scientists and all those people who are out there driving cabs? What is this government doing about that? The best and the brightest we already have here, we're not helping them nearly enough to get into the regulated professions.

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Prue: Oh, listen to this. I hear the cat-calls coming from the other side already, pretending that they actually care and that they've actually done something in the last seven years.

Let's just talk about immigration. Let's talk about where immigrants come to in this country. Forty-four per cent of all the immigrants who come to this country come to the province of Ontario. Now, that is down. It used to

be more than 50%; it used to be 55% only a decade ago. But they are finding that the opportunities that this government is offering are not contingent with their expectation, and they're choosing to go elsewhere, where governments have been more successful in integrating them into the mainstream and where they have a better opportunity to use the skills and abilities that they have. In fact, the number of immigrants who come to Ontario and to Canada—slightly more than 50% of all the immigrants who have been chosen in the last number of years have at least some university and/or a university degree. Are we maximizing the potential with them? I think not, because we have not helped them and we have not been there to assist them in making the application or in understanding how those skills and abilities might be used here in Ontario.

Some 79.2% of all the immigrants who come to Ontario come to the Toronto census management area. That's the GTA, by and large, for most people's understanding—79.2%. In fact, within the city of Toronto, the number of foreign-born people will exceed the number of Canadian-born people within the next census year. So more people live here today in the city of Toronto who were born elsewhere than who were actually born here in Canada. I think this has been a magnet, and those people have come with great expectations.

As I said on the last occasion, I worked for the immigration department for 21 years. I worked at places like Pearson International Airport, at border crossings, and I helped to process people when they mostly got off planes, sometimes out of cars or buses. When they came to this country with the piece of paper in their hand, a landing document to become a permanent resident, you could see in their eyes the expectation that they had for this wonderful land, the hope that they had, if not for themselves then at least for their children.

So many of them, when I go out to groups around Toronto today—and I had an opportunity to have dinner with the Ethiopian community last week, and with the Pakistani community, and I'm going out for some more this week, as I'm sure all members do in Ontario; we all do that. Look at the hope in their eyes and talk to them. I talk to Bangladeshis who have come here with incredibly good degrees as accountants and they are not recognized in their chosen field. Canada and Ontario have agreements to recognize the education from Pakistan.

Pakistan and Bangladesh used to be one country. I know that they were cut in half, or bifurcated, by India, but they used to be east Pakistan and west Pakistan. Then, when the Bangladeshis broke away over the mother languages issue and formed their own country—Canada and Ontario do not recognize the credentials of east Pakistan; they recognize the credentials of west Pakistan. So all those professional accountants and bookkeepers who have come here hoping to be able to use their credentials can't use them here.

What has this government done in terms of negotiating or talking with them while they were making application to come to Canada? And we do need accountants, we do

need actuaries, we do need people who are good with books and who are bookkeepers. What have they done to tell them when they come here that we won't recognize their credentials?

I wonder, if we had done the right thing, as I explained that the province of Quebec has done, then we could have chosen them. We could have told them at the time of their application that they would either need to have upgrading or that they couldn't use their skills, and those people could have made a wise and just decision for themselves and their families as to whether to come here in the first place. Because it is better, I would suggest, that new immigrants who have skills and abilities which are marketable at home—they may want to stay there. It is probably doing their countries a far better duty and a far better humanitarian effort if they are a doctor in a place like, I don't know—I'll pick Burundi again because it's far-flung and we don't have many Burundian immigrants. It's better to leave a doctor there who is a doctor and who can assist the people in that land than to bring them here where they can't practise and do what they know how to do. It is only logical. And if the province was there—if the province who holds all the keys to the regulatory nature, who holds all the keys to whether or not those skills are going to be recognized in any of the major professions tells them that this is not going to fly in Ontario, then I think people will make a very wise decision.

The federal government says, "You're a doctor. We need doctors." They can't say where the person is going to go, where they're going to come, what province they're going to end up in, because there's no law to that. But Quebec has solved that problem, and I think that we need to do something. We need to make sure that the 50% of all immigrants who come to this country with university training and/or skills are looked after.

Because you see, what's happening in Ontario is that those very skilled immigrants in the regulated professions are starting to choose not to come to Ontario. They're choosing not to come to this province. In 2004, regulated professionals made up 12.1% of all the immigrants who came to Ontario. By 2008, five years into this government's first mandate, and into the second one, that number was down to 8.3%. I would suggest that when the next census figures come out, it's going to be lower than that still, because what is happening is the word goes back: In Ontario, we don't help. In Ontario, we don't regulate. In Ontario, we don't inform in advance. It's not going to work. They're not going to want to come here and they're not going to build Ontario.

As I said, the government chose to give \$30 million for the best and brightest to go to school. Would that they would give \$30 million for the best and brightest who are already here to be upgraded, to use those skills that they had at home and that they need to use here.

The government is also failing on another front. Again, I go back to if we had our own system like Quebec, we could act in a much more humane, much more balanced way.

In 2008, the number of temporary residents in Ontario was 240,264. That is 40.8% of all temporary residents in Canada. Temporary residents are people like students, foreign workers, humanitarian entrants and temporary residents who are here for some special purpose, sometimes for medical treatment or for many other things—religious purposes. There are 240,000 people.

Let's put into perspective how much that is. A pretty large percentage of all of the people who are living in Ontario today have a defined status which does not permit them to participate in Canadian life. They all have a number 9 on their SIN card at the front which, in the majority of cases, will not allow them to work, or will allow them to work under very restricted conditions. They do not have the opportunity, unless they are students, to attend schools, although the children of temporary workers, I want to say, do, and I think that's an enlightened aspect of most of the school boards here in Ontario. If they are students, they cannot work except under prescribed circumstances. If they are here on humanitarian entrance, that's difficult as well.

0930

The figures for those are pretty revealing as well. In Ontario, 38% of those 240,000 people who are here with limited status are foreign workers. Many of them work on our farms. I know we have had many discussions in this House, certainly from the members who represent ridings that are more rural in nature than mine of Beaches—East York, about those temporary farm workers. They often work in horrendous conditions. They work without safety protocols that most of us would consider quite normal. There were a couple of deaths just a few months ago. Two farm workers were killed on the job. It continues to be one of the most dangerous occupations in all of Canada, to work on farms, particularly for foreign farm workers, who are expected to do a lot of the grunt and heavy work. They are literally here without protection.

Here in Ontario, we don't have any say in bringing them in; we let the federal government bring them in. At the end of the year, most fly home or go back to wherever and wait for the next growing season. Very few of them stay here for longer than six or eight months at a time. While they're here, we do not provide them a whole lot of protection. Most of them make minimum wage for backbreaking, horrible work, and they're not allowed to unionize. Oh, my goodness. This government—horror of horrors—would never let those farm workers have any kind of union that could protect them, in terms of health and safety regulations or trying to get one cent more than the \$10.25 minimum wage that's out there. Horror of horrors, no. They can't do that. That would be the death of the agri-farm.

We do nothing on that. We, in this Legislature—although there are some who advocate for it, like me and members of my party, this government does nothing on that. Because they did not help to choose to bring them in, they wash their hands; it's a federal responsibility.

They do nothing on foreign students. They are out there marketing to foreign students so the foreign stu-

dents can come and pay the full cost of university and college education in Ontario. This government does little to regulate all of it or to provide services to people, many of whom are here for a short period of time and are expected to return. That's the reality here in Ontario.

We have no say whatsoever because we have no protocol. We have no law such as the province of Quebec has signed.

The minister, of course, has said that he wants "to spend the outstanding \$207 million promised to Ontario's newcomers and immediately commence negotiations on a comprehensive new agreement that provides the adequate funding, planning, and governance necessary for immigrants to succeed and for Ontario to prosper." But he doesn't want to follow the logical steps. He doesn't want to take any responsibility. The amendment to this motion put forward by my colleagues in the official opposition demands some kind of protocol. It's no wonder that the federal government has been reluctant in the past to give money holus-bolus to the Ontario Legislature, and particularly to this government: because they have no plan. They want the \$207 million, but they're not willing to take any responsibility or outline how that money is going to be spent. I agree with the amendment. I think that has to be done.

The first way that has to be done is for the government to recognize that they have a responsibility, not only to the immigrants but also to those people who have temporary status in Ontario. The number of temporary workers arriving to Ontario in 2008 was 66,634, 3.5 times the number of skilled-worker, principal-applicant, permanent residents arriving that year, which was 18,757. The government in Ontario is making a calculated decision. They talk about helping and needing immigrants and take 18,000 skilled immigrants, but on the q.t., they're more than happy to let people in here with temporary status, who have no long-term stake in the community; who likely, at the end of each and every term of six or eight months, have to go back from whence they came. Then the government washes its hands, but they still want \$207 million to do absolutely nothing. Ontario is actively increasing the number of foreign workers, but there are no protections, as I said, for these workers.

I want to talk about getting your professional licence in Ontario, the experience of international and Canadian applicants and the 2010 Fairness Commissioner's report. Now, I have railed on for a few minutes here about people driving cabs or delivering pizza. The tales are anecdotal, but they're legendary. If you live in the city of Toronto particularly, where the bulk of immigrants are, in the Toronto CMA, you will have all heard those. You will all have met people who do this. But the Fairness Commissioner drew the following conclusions.

First, generally, there appears to be adequate information about the licensing process available from multiple sources. However, it is not always clear to applicants how to access this information and whether it is reliable, and that is particularly the case at the visa office when they're first arriving. That is particularly the case at the airport, if they were to fly into Toronto.

The Ontario government, years and years ago, when I first started with the immigration department at Pearson airport—it was then called Toronto International Airport—had a presence. There was an Ontario immigration welcome service that sat down and talked with every new immigrant who arrived at that airport after the federal immigration officers, of which I was one in the early 1970s, processed the person to landing, filled out the documents and had the forms signed so they could get social insurance numbers and the like. We sent them to Ontario Welcome House and the Ontario Welcome House reception people who worked at the airport.

They, in turn, were responsible for a great many things: making sure that the new immigrants had somewhere to go, a hotel or somewhere, if they were coming and family wasn't waiting for them; making sure that they understood the laws of Ontario as they related to minimum wage and everything else, so they wouldn't be subject to something bad happening to them in the immediate future; making sure that they had the address of Ontario Welcome House, which was on University Avenue in those days, in Toronto, so that if they required any additional information they could freely access it. This was in the days before computers, so you had to come down and talk to an actual official—making sure that the social insurance number applications and other things were properly filled out; making sure that people knew where to take their credentials for translation; and everything else. In the austerity that happened in the years following that, that service was cut. Ontario walked away from its immigrants. Ontario walked away to save a few dollars and didn't do what was necessary. When Quebec, in 1978, decided to get back into this game in a big way, it was one of the first things they restored.

So, there is information, but there's no way people know how to access it or how reliable it is.

The second thing the Fairness Commissioner talked about is that internationally trained participants experience more difficulty finding information about licensing requirements than do the domestically trained. Now, this is not that difficult to believe. I mean, surely it's true: If somebody has lived in a place for a long time, you generally know where to access things. Think about any of us moving to a new town. You move to a new town and you start to get lost on the streets. You don't know where the supermarket is. You don't have a doctor. Where's the post office, where's the community centre? You don't know that stuff. It takes a while, even for someone born here who is moving to a new town or city, to find that out. The same is true and is expanded many times for those who are coming from a new country, especially if they're coming to a large place like Toronto, which is very difficult for people to fathom: how to get around on the subway, how to locate all the services, what services are available, what things to expect, what things not to.

That's something that a place like Ontario Welcome House could have done, but this government chooses not to do that anymore. They choose to not be in the immi-

gration game, other than to take the \$207 million that the minister insists on getting.

0940

The Fairness Commissioner said, “Internationally educated individuals get mixed messages from different levels of government. (An immigrant professional earns points for education and work experience when he or she applies to become a permanent resident of Canada, but faces licensing challenges once here.)” I’ve already talked about that but I just want to reiterate that it’s not just me saying this. The Fairness Commissioner, appointed by this Legislature, says exactly the same thing.

Here it is. Here’s our grid system: You need 65 points to make it to Canada. You’re an engineer with a university degree. Well, there’s 20 points right off the bat. They don’t tell you that the difficulty you’re going to face getting licensed is sometimes insurmountable.

I don’t want to pick on engineers, but I do have the opportunity, from time to time, to go down to the engineers when they are helping engineers from other countries become accredited here. There is a ceremony once a year, which I have now attended twice, which is a very moving ceremony. You see people from literally all over the world who are sitting there who have finally been recognized for their qualifications. The engineers, I think, are doing a pretty good job in terms of trying to get those people accredited. Would that all the other professions were doing the same good job.

But having said that, the Fairness Commissioner is right. When they apply to become a permanent resident they get a whole bunch of points, but they face licensing challenges once here.

If we had our own grid system, if we had our own visa officers like Quebec does, then we could explain to the majority of people who are coming to Canada and who are coming to Toronto or to Ontario what they could expect. Surely that’s the least we could do for prospective new citizens who we expect and know will contribute so much to this province.

She went on to state, “Internationally trained applicants need to be better informed, prior to arriving in Canada, about the importance of having all their required documents.”

Well, of course. The federal visa office doesn’t know where they’re going to go. They don’t know whether they’re going to go to Prince Edward Island or to Quebec—no, they know if they’re going to Quebec because the visa officer will tell them that right on the spot. They don’t know if they’re going to go to British Columbia or Alberta, so they can’t say what documents are important. But if we had somebody there, if we spent the money wisely, they would know, and they would come with it.

The Fairness Commissioner writes, “The length, complexity and cost of licensing processes are frustrating for both Canadian-trained and internationally trained individuals.” I think I need not comment. That’s true.

“Financial support in the form of government grants or loans to pay for education appears to be more accessible

by domestically trained than by internationally trained candidates.” That’s absolutely true as well.

What is this government doing about that? I ask you, what is this government doing to close that gap? I’ve said that I have no umbrage against spending \$30 million to bring the best and the brightest. But what about the ones who come with the qualifications already done? Why aren’t we spending money on them? They are the best and the brightest as well. That’s why we’re choosing them. That’s why Canada is choosing them. That’s why Ontario wants them here. What are we doing for them? Unfortunately, not near enough.

She goes on to write, “Internationally trained applicants appear to be less prepared for examinations than those educated in Canada.”

That is true. One might expect that. The formats are different. What is taught in the schools may be different. Ours may be outdated or theirs may be outdated, depending on where they are coming from, in terms of the expertise. In the end, I would imagine, even if they were in English, I would have difficulty passing examinations from New Zealand or Australia on the first crack as well, whatever the qualification was, because you simply don’t know what was taught and how to write it. That’s the reality.

She writes, “The requirement of some regulatory bodies for Canadian work experience is perceived as a particularly difficult challenge by internationally trained applicants.” I think, too, the government has a responsibility, if not within the immigration system then at least by some order-in-council regulation that says that this is not a legal requirement, that firms ought not to be allowed to do this. “Do you have experience?” “Yes.” “Give me the names of places that you worked that gave you that experience,” and if you list Glasgow or if you list Paris or if you list Kuala Lumpur, then that’s what you list. There ought not to be any requirement that that experience be gained in Canada, but simply that you have that experience. And she went on to write some other things.

That’s where I think this government is missing the boat. I have heard nothing discussed by the minister or the parliamentary assistant to date that would tell me that this government wants to move on anything except getting the \$207 million. As I said the last time, the law in Canada, section 8 of the Immigration Act of Canada, requires that there be ongoing consultation between the federal and provincial governments, because this is one of two joint jurisdictions. It happens each and every year between this province and the federal government: There is some level of negotiation or discussion about immigration levels, about who is coming, changes to the act. That needs to continue, that’s what the law is, but really, for Ontario to be in the game we’ve got to do more than we’ve done in the past.

I’d like to talk about immigration to Ontario in terms of the colour of poverty, because I think this is a very gnawing detail. For Hansard, that’s “gn,” gnawing. It’s a very gnawing detail. Although I think we as Ontarians

should be very proud of the integration of new people from many lands with many religions, with many dialects, with many languages, with many cultures, it is a reality in this province that if you are poor, chances are you are a woman; if you are poor, the chances are that you are a person of colour; if you are poor, the chances are that you are a person who is a new immigrant or a First Nations Canadian. The last one, a very important one, is that you have some kind of disability. Those are our poor. That is absolutely the truth. Between 1981 and 2001, the number of immigrants who are poor in Toronto—largely people of colour—grew by 125%. We bring people to this country and to this province and the reality is that when they get here, they're poor. We have seen the reality of that poverty in many places.

In Toronto, the city of Toronto, to its credit, and the United Way of Toronto, to its credit, came out with Poverty by Postal Code, and they highlighted 13 key communities where new immigrants, people of colour, were coming and where there was poverty, and it was endemic; it was there; it was in your face; it didn't seem to go away, despite waves of immigrants coming from different places all the time. One of those places is in my riding; it's called Crescent Town. It's a wonderful high-rise community of about 15,000 people, almost all of whom come from somewhere in South Asia. They come from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka; that's where the majority of them are from. The poverty there is gut-wrenching. These are hard-working people. These are people who don't ask for welfare. These are people who have minimum-wage jobs. These are people who care very much for their families. But they are poor. I think that we have failed them. We have failed them in the whole immigration experiment by not giving the necessary tools when they applied and by not giving the necessary tools when they arrived. They had to learn—and learn the hard way—how to acculturate themselves, how to find out things.

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Slowly but surely, as they become established, they're getting better at it. Slowly but surely, you're starting to see immigrant aid self-help groups being set up by these various communities where they speak the language and know the culture, but the funds flowing to them have been few and far between.

I would hope that if this government is successful in negotiating \$207 million, they will look very carefully and clearly that this is one of the key places where that money should be spent. It is only through that education, through that interaction with immigrants who have been here before, that something can be done.

I'd also like to talk about licensing. This is a key aspect where this government has been missing in action throughout the entire time, and that is licensing not for new immigrants but for immigration consultants.

When I worked in the immigration department, we didn't think there was any lower form of life than immigration consultants. These were people with absolutely no credentials or training—in those days; I'm going to

get into the modern one—who would hang around taking advantage of people who came from their culture or from their country or who spoke their language.

You would have consultants who spoke many of the Indian languages, who would deal with the Indian community. You would have consultants who were from Jamaica or the Caribbean, who would deal with the Caribbean community. You would have consultants who spoke Portuguese, who would deal with the Portuguese and the Azorean communities. You would have those who spoke Spanish deal with Spanish-speaking communities.

The only key was that they were immigrants themselves a few years before, had figured out what was happening out there and would say, "I can help you to stay in Canada; I can help you with your immigration application; I can help you to bring your relatives," and they would charge exorbitant amounts of money to do almost nothing. They would get them to make claims of refugee status that were spurious and bogus. I can't tell you how many times I had to listen to Portuguese refugee claimants who claimed to be Jehovah's Witnesses. We had more than 10,000 applications in Toronto alone. The entire Jehovah's Witness church in Portugal only had 183 adherents, all of whom were in Portugal and were not being persecuted.

This is the kind of stuff, and it was because of these bogus refugee self-help people, who were charging tens of thousands of dollars to assist people in making bogus claims and in doing things that were clearly contrary to the best interests of this country and of this province.

We have failed to license them properly in the past. We have moved down that road a little bit, because now there is a society of professional immigration consultants. These are people who have been trained, some of whom are former immigration staff or have met the minimum standards set up by that society.

I have to say that there is some aspect to this that is good. But I continue to read—and we all continue to read in the paper each and every day—about these consultants and how they're ripping people off, how they're making them say things and do things that aren't legitimate or logical.

On the last occasion, I talked about a man who was in my office from India. He came here and was working very hard for a company and was being paid \$100,000 a year. He was an excellent employee and the company desperately wanted to keep him here. He went to an immigration consultant, who told him to make a claim for refugee status from India.

He was crying in my office because he had been duped. He was a man who earned \$100,000 a year, who spoke impeccable English and who was university-trained. He was duped that that was the only way he could stay in this country, and he made a claim. He was crying in my office because not only had he spent tens of thousands of dollars making a claim that was going nowhere, but he admitted freely to me that he was unaware how any person from India, the world's largest democ-

racy, could be a refugee from that country. He had made the claim upon that advice and had found himself being forced out of Canada and perhaps not ever being allowed back in, because if you get deported you might never get back in. The company was desperately trying to keep him here because he was key to their economic survival and he was key to about 20 other workers who relied on his expertise to keep their jobs as well.

That's the kind of thing that we need to move on. That's the kind of thing that this government needs to do in terms of licensing of immigration consultants. I bring up his story as only one of many thousands. I'm sure there are thousands of people like him, people who want to stay here and want to contribute and go out there who find these unscrupulous consultants who give them bogus and bad advice.

In the end, he found a legitimate lawyer who was trying to repair as much of the damage as he could. In fact, the man would have qualified to remain in Canada as a person who was going to bring economic benefit to this country. In fact, that's who he was. Had he made that application through a legitimate lawyer or somebody who knew what they were doing instead of making a stupid allegation of torture in India, then I'm sure he would have had much more success.

I think this government needs to move on that front too, and I haven't heard anything from the minister, in terms of his \$207-million request, on whether he wants to do that. I think we all need to hear that. That's why I'm looking forward to the ongoing nature of this debate: to see what other people opposite are going to say about immigration, because it is key to this province.

It is key to our survival, in terms of our manufacturing, industrial, commercial and intellectual base, that we get and keep the best and the brightest. If we are going to bring those people from around the world, then we have to treat them right. We can't put them at the mercy of unscrupulous immigration consultants. We can't put them at the mercy of a system to let them fend for themselves and try to determine what documents and education are necessary to get the kind of job that they are capable of and aspire to. We can't put them at that mercy. We can't put them at the mercy of going into the visa office and being chosen randomly to go across Canada, and then they choose to come to Ontario where their skills may not be needed and where they may face unemployment. We can't bring them to Canada and have them go into poverty, into all of those places where people of colour are increasingly living in poverty and where it's going up by 125%.

We have an obligation in Ontario to do the right thing, and the right thing is for us to be in the immigration game. If Quebec can do it, then we can do it. If this minister wants \$207 million, we want to know where that money is going to be spent and how it is going to help immigrants. I would suggest the key way is for us to sit down and to negotiate with the government of Canada to be a part of the immigration system: to choose them in the first place and to have all the rules and regulations set

out in law, not just in policy or some memorandum of understanding, but set out in law what this province will do to help, what this province will do to prosecute people who are illegally acting under the immigration acts, what this province will do in terms of acculturation of new citizens and what this province will do in order to make sure that everybody lives up to his or her full potential.

I am going to vote for the amendment that is put forward by the opposition because I think it's a good amendment. I think it strengthens what the minister is going to do. In spite of the criticism in what I've had to say, this causes no harm, and I'm likely to vote for the motion as well. But what I want the government to do is not to think in small terms like asking for \$207 million but to actually seize in their hands the opportunity that is going to benefit this province and the people of this province for generations to come, and that is to do what Quebec has done: write our own act, enforce our own rules and choose our own immigrants, to the benefit of all.

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

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I was delighted to listen to the member from Beaches–East York for almost 41 minutes speaking about immigration. There's no doubt in my mind he has a lot of experience in this regard.

I want to say that the intent and the aim and the goal of the motion is to get support from both sides of the House, support from the Conservatives and the NDP and, of course, the government, to create a force to convince the federal government to live up to its obligations and duty.

I listened to the member from Beaches–East York talking about negotiations with the federal government, and there's no agreement in place. The minister, the Honourable Dr. Hoskins, spoke about this in detail when he introduced the motion quite some time ago.

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I want to remind everyone about the agreement between the province and the federal government. The Canada-Ontario immigration agreement was signed on November 21, 2005, and provided \$920 million in new federal funding for settlement services over the five-year period, in addition to \$540 million in base funding. A one-year extension to the agreement was announced on May 5, 2010, which commits an additional \$428 million for 2010-11. So what happened? We received \$713 million. If you make the calculations, we are short \$207 million.

As the minister mentioned over and over, we are the home of immigrants in this nation. Almost 100,000 people come to this province on a yearly basis, and most of those people come to this province because they see hope and a future for themselves and their family to be prosperous, live in comfort, be able to accredit themselves, find a job in their professions and raise their family in the best way possible.

What we are doing in the province of Ontario is we're trying to convince the federal government to work to be a true partner in order to give us the chance to support

many immigrants who come to the province of Ontario. If you compare us to Manitoba, British Columbia or Quebec, for instance, they get almost 1.5 times more support than the province of Ontario gets from the federal government to support an immigrant.

Also, in terms of supporting immigrants, since we got elected, we created so many different initiatives to accommodate many immigrants who come to the province of Ontario. Lately, we launched a bridge program in almost 200 locations across the province of Ontario to allow many immigrants to fit in and integrate in the province of Ontario. From the 100,000 immigrants who come on a yearly basis, we're able, through those bridge programs, to give a chance to 40,000 new immigrants to work in their professions and also help themselves and help their families.

Not a long time ago, I had the chance and the privilege to announce a program in conjunction with Fanshawe College in London to help nurses update their skills and their ability to be accredited in the province of Ontario.

Those initiatives are important for immigrants and important for all of us in the province of Ontario, because we believe strongly that our future depends on newcomers and depends on the brightest people who come from different parts of the globe. They come to the province of Ontario to share their wealth with us and to help us maintain our prosperity, and also to give us the ability to continue progress in the province of Ontario.

Therefore, we call on the federal government to give back to the province of Ontario \$207 million. That \$207 million, as the member from Beaches–East York outlined, is important to us to fund and support many different programs across the province of Ontario to help newcomers to come.

I want to give you a life story from my riding of London–Fanshawe. A lady named Mona came to Canada almost four years ago. She came, and she was lucky enough that when she immigrated to the province of Ontario, she got a job. After four years, she became a Canadian citizen. That person, for some reason, lost her job. Due to the economic circumstances in the region, she lost her job; she found herself without a job. She thought about the best way for her to update her skills to be able to find a different job. Therefore, she was looking for a way to learn more English to upgrade her skills. She found out that because she's a Canadian citizen, she cannot enrol in the federal program.

Another example: Two people want to come from Central America. Samuel and Ramona want to come to London, and they start navigating the system. As you know, we have a portal. In many different cities in the province of Ontario, you can go online and check what's available for you when you come to the province of Ontario, when you come to Canada. They were confused because there are so many different programs. There's lots of duplications of programs from the federal and the provincial government.

Also, another person who wants to come—her name is Sheri—came to London, too. She came from England.

She was looking at how to find a job in the province of Ontario. She was navigating the system. She went to the employment centre to see how she could accredit herself to be able to find a job in Ontario, and she also went to the provincial side. She didn't know what to do. She thought she was wasting her time because she went first to the federal government and was asked to go to the province.

So, this is what we're asking; this is what our Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is asking the House in this place: asking the federal government to work on a partnership with the province of Ontario in order to create a special mechanism that can help people who want to come to Ontario and to Canada. That's what we are asking for. We're not just asking for the money; we're asking about partnership. We're asking the federal government to allow us to administer those programs in the province of Ontario and to have one program instead of two programs, one federal, one provincial, doing the same things. It's confusing for people who want to come from different parts of the globe. It's confusing for us as a community. It's a waste of time for us and for the immigrants who want to come, and also it's a waste of resources.

As we talk about a strategy—and I listened to the member from Beaches–East York talking about many different elements. He mentioned immigration, consulting, many different things, and he knows—and he is the first one who should know—that those elements are controlled by the federal government, not by the province of Ontario. The licence for consultants is 100% run and controlled by the federal government. Do you know what? Sometimes people go to seek advice from a lawyer and the lawyer gives them bad advice, too. It's a complex issue.

He is talking about there not being enough programs across Ontario to help newcomers. That's not correct. I came from the city of London, and we have three wonderful organizations: the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre, the WIL employment centre and LUSO. They work on a regular basis with newcomers to help them navigate the system, help them go to school, get accreditations for their education; how to deal, on a daily basis, in the community; how they can navigate the system on some very important issues.

Also, in terms of foreign-trained international credentials, I know it's a very complex issue. I have been in that ministry for almost seven years. We've done a lot, but we don't say we've done everything or that we can celebrate success yet, because we have a lot of steps ahead of us to try to find the best way to accommodate, accredit and integrate people who come from different parts of the globe. I still remember when we passed Bill 124, access for foreign-trained international people who want to come to Ontario to be accredited. We worked with all the regulatory bodies; for instance, the engineers, who have been referenced many times in the House. The engineers were the best group we worked with. They were accommodating for many people. They tried their best to have a

system to help all newcomers, especially with engineering degrees, to fit and integrate into the province of Ontario.

But we have a problem. As the member mentioned, when you apply to Canada from different parts of the globe, you apply to come to Canada and say, "I want to come to Ontario." Every year, we welcome almost 15,000 engineers to Ontario, and we graduate, from our schools in the province, 5,000. If you add them up, it will be 20,000 engineers that we have in Ontario. Are we able to accommodate all these people? Technically, for 13 million people, for the capacity we have, it would be impossible. But the engineering regulating body works with us very well. They do their best to give the education they need. They give whatever possible things they have to allow all the engineers to fit in, integrate and accredit in Ontario; to give them an equal chance and footing to compete for jobs in Ontario.

And accountants: They're also great organizations. We've worked with them very well in the past and will continue to work with them in the future to accommodate all the accountants from every different part of the globe. But, as you know and as has been mentioned, every nation has a different curriculum. Every nation has different programs, different strategies and different kinds of education. Therefore, we have to put in place a mechanism, which has been done by the accountants, to accredit the many different people who want to come and be accountants in the province of Ontario.

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I say it's a difficult issue, because we welcome people on a regular basis, on a yearly basis, from 170 nations; we welcome people from 170 nations. Almost 250,000 people come to Canada, and 100,000 come to Ontario. For those 100,000 people, those people have education from various different universities across the planet—many, many. Some of them are accredited by UNESCO, accredited by WES, the World Education Services body, and some of them are not. It's very complex to navigate every university to see which one is okay and which one does not fit and is not being compatible with our system in the province of Ontario. So that's why there's complexity there.

It is very important for us, as the minister outlined over and over, to get the support from the federal government. The \$207 million will give us a chance to help many thousands and thousands of people from different backgrounds to be able to study, to accredit themselves and to be able to work in the province of Ontario.

We've been working with accreditation departments. We've been working with many different regulatory bodies in the province of Ontario to find a way to help the newcomers to fit, to integrate and to be accredited. That's why we established the Office of the Fairness Commissioner. The Fairness Commissioner is there to oversee the conduct of regulatory bodies in the province of Ontario, because, as you know, so many regulatory bodies—as I mentioned, so many people graduated from different colleges, from different universities, so it is

difficult and complex. But that regulatory body does its best, in conjunction with the Fairness Commissioner, in conjunction with our government, with various departments in our government, to see the best way that we can accommodate and integrate people who want to come to Ontario.

We pay a lot of attention to this area because the future is built on immigrants. It's a nation and a province built by immigrants. Therefore, I think, for our own interests and for the sake of the prosperity of the province of Ontario, we want every immigrant to be successful. We want every person in this province to be successful, because the only way we can be prosperous in the future, the only way Canada can be prosperous—if Ontario is doing good, Canada will do good. That's why we continue working with all the agencies, groups and organizations across the province of Ontario, which are supported heavily by our ministry and also by our government: in order to create and facilitate the integration for many immigrants who want to come to the province of Ontario.

I know we take blame sometimes for a lot of things, and the member opposite mentioned a lot of things which are out of our jurisdiction; it's a part of the federal government's. That's what we want to do: We want to convince the federal government to continue working with us as a partner to find a way to accommodate newcomers who want to come to the province of Ontario. I strongly hope that both sides of the House come to an agreement and support this motion in order to convince the federal government to live up to its agreement, which has been signed many different years, and also give us the financial support to be able to support those programs across the province of Ontario.

It's difficult and important at the same time for all of us, especially the accreditations. We hear a lot about it. People who have certain credentials are driving taxis and delivering pizza—many different stories on the street.

As you know, the government does not find jobs for people, but the government creates an opportunity for people to find a job. That's what we do in the province of Ontario. We create the conditions and an environment for the people to find their job, and we create an environment and conditions for the immigrants, when they come to Canada, to find their way in the province of Ontario—to go to school, to learn English as a second language, or French, or, also, to go to an organization like the a cross-cultural learning centre or LUSO, an employment centre, to help them navigate the system and find good jobs that suit their credentials and their skills.

As I've mentioned, over the years, from 100,000, due to our investments in many groups, organizations and settlement programs across the province of Ontario, we were able to help 40,000—that's a huge number—through the bridge program, which we implemented across the province to help those people to upgrade their skills and their language to find a job they like or that suits their credentials.

The issue here, as the minister outlined, is not just about money. It's about partnership. It's about the ability

for us to administrate the settlement and program in the province of Ontario. It's about eliminating the duplications in the program in Ontario. It's about newcomers finding their way and being able to settle in the province. It's about our ability to allow and select some people to come to Ontario. We have been given almost 1,000 now from the provincial government under the PNP program to select some students and intellectuals and people with high skills to live in the province of Ontario. But those programs are being well supported by the federal government. People apply and wait and wait, and still they lost work, and you know permission is in the hands of the federal government.

So we want to select people. We want to also have the ability to administrate the program in the province. We want to also work with the federal government in order to select the best of the best to come to Ontario. We want to also have the ability to help the newcomers to fit and integrate and be able to provide for themselves and their families, and also for the province of Ontario, for the great nation of Canada. That's what we are working on, so that's not about money only; it's about administration, about ability to be a full partner with the federal government.

I wish I had more time to speak about this issue, because this issue is important to me and to many, many people who live in Ontario, and also those who want to come to the great province of Ontario.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 8(a), this House will recess until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 1017 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. James J. Bradley: I take great pleasure in introducing Mr. Larry Molyneaux, president of the PAO, Ron Middel, CAO of the PAO, and Karl Walsh, president and CEO of the OPPA, who are with us in the gallery, and all members of the Police Association of Ontario.

Mr. Gerry Martiniuk: I would like to present my niece, Shauna Martiniuk Rajaratnam, who is in the gallery along with her children, Ethan, Sumner, Jared and Pyper.

Mr. Jeff Leal: I'm pleased to have some guests here in the members' east gallery. Bill Thompson and John Kristensen won a lunch with the MPP at a silent auction recently, and they look forward to attending question period this morning.

I have two police officers from the Peterborough Lakefield police services who will be joining us shortly: Jeff Chartier and David McFadden.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to introduce Carol Sweeney from the Toronto–Danforth riding, visiting us here today.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: It is a pleasure to welcome Mike Tarini and Ken Rice, who are both with the North

Bay police service. We're delighted to have them here today down from North Bay to visit with us.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Please welcome Steve Boucher and Brenda Lawson from the Ottawa Police Association to Queen's Park. Welcome.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I had a great meeting this morning with police association representatives from northern Ontario: Gerry Rooney from the Sault Ste. Marie police association, and Rob Steudle, Brian Crocker and Jim Glena from the Thunder Bay police association. Welcome.

Mr. Charles Sousa: I have the great pleasure of introducing, in the members' gallery, the executive director of the Kidney Foundation of Canada, Mr. Jim O'Brien. Welcome.

I'd also like to introduce Mr. Jack Sloggett, general manager of HME Mobility Ltd., with the assistive devices program. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I believe we have unanimous consent today that all members be permitted to wear ribbons in recognition of Adoption Awareness Month.

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

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'd like to introduce some people from the Ottawa Police Association who are here today: Stu Feldman, Richard Marcil, Jim Oakes, Glenn Wasson, Dan Brennan and Brenda Lawson.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, you've added some 75% to Ontario families' hydro bills. You've boasted that rates need to go up even higher. Now, according to media reports, you seem to be on the verge of another major backtrack. But a 10% cut, after almost doubling hydro rates, is a lot like the backtrack you tried to do when you increased the HST by \$1,000 per family and then handed out a small \$50 tax credit.

Premier, why do you think Ontario families can be so easily confused by your back-and-forth, to-and-fro energy policies?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm pleased as usual to receive a question, but obviously I'm going to disagree with the math and the numbers put forward by my honourable colleague. I think there's a lot of creativity there. Shortly, the long-term energy plan will be released and he'll get a good sense of exactly what we're talking about in terms of price increases.

We've always said to Ontarians that electricity prices are going to go up and we're going to find a way through our fall economic statement to specifically address that in the way that we have with respect to so many other issues that concern our families, including, for example, our children's activity tax credit—we'll be voting on that on third reading very shortly. I'll be very interested in

learning whether or not the opposition parties support that important new benefit for Ontario families.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Sadly, all that Ontario families are seeing is a McGuinty government scrambling, a government whose energy plans have gone off the rails. Ontario families won't be so easily confused by this latest backtrack.

The finance minister also tried to confuse hydro issues yesterday. You know that Ontario families have paid \$7.8 billion in debt retirement charges on their hydro bills. When asked about that, the finance minister tried to confuse the issue by talking about another hydro unfunded liability altogether that has nothing to do with debt retirement charges.

Premier, why are you trying to confuse Ontario families, or don't you want them to know exactly where those debt retirement charge dollars have gone?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The Minister of Finance spoke to that issue yesterday and, I thought, very clearly and particularly demonstrated that each and every year we continue to pay down the debt retirement charge.

I think what families are concerned about is ensuring that we have a clean, modern, reliable supply of electricity. I had an opportunity to speak to some families again this morning. They're telling me that they like clean energy. They like the fact that it means new jobs. They like the fact that it means better health for their children. They like the fact that it means we're going to have reliable electricity because we're building more, but they have a real concern about the cost. That's why, tomorrow, we'll specifically find a way to help families with respect to electricity costs in the way that we have done in the past with respect to their property taxes, children's activity tax credits and the like.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I think that Ontario families, after seven years, have caught on to you. They're not going to be so easily confused by your scrambling when it comes to their hydro bills or the debt retirement charge.

Premier, as you probably know, the original plan was to have the debt retirement charge gone by 2012. With no explanation whatsoever, you pushed it back to 2015, and your finance minister used interest as an excuse. Interest rates are at historic lows. If anything, the hydro debt should have been repaid earlier than the target date of 2012. It's very alarming that your finance minister doesn't seem to understand that, or maybe clearly the plan is for your government to try to confuse families on the issue. Premier, if you didn't put the money towards retiring the residual stranded debt, where exactly did the \$7.8 billion go?

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Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, my colleague the Minister of Finance spoke to this yesterday. We have steadily reduced the stranded debt by about \$1 billion in each of the last six years. It's now \$5.7 billion lower than it was in 2003. On their watch, they added \$1 billion to

the stranded debt. They added a billion to the debt; we've taken \$5.7 billion off the debt.

At the same time, we're investing in a modern, clean, reliable electricity system. Families want clean electricity. They want us to shut down dirty, coal-fired generation. They want us to do more to protect the health of their children and our seniors. They want to make sure that we have more jobs. They want to make sure we have a reliable electricity system. That's our plan. They also want us to help them out with costs, and that's what we'll be speaking about tomorrow.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: It's very disappointing to see the Premier engaging in this effort to try to confuse Ontario families when it comes to the debt retirement charge and the residual stranded debt. The Premier is talking about another unfunded liability altogether. Premier, you know that it's paid for through Hydro One, through OPG, through the LDCs. Premier, I believe that you actually do know this: that the debt retirement charge payments go towards the residual stranded debt, that \$7.8 billion. Families have already paid \$7.8 billion, and for some reason, you've postponed how much longer that's going to be on their bills from 2012 to 2015.

Ontario families want to know: What did you do with the money? Premier will you do the right thing? Will you post publicly the value of the residual stranded debt and will you put it on people's hydro bills each and every year so they know exactly where their money is really going?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Let's start with some facts. The unfunded liability, his last day in office, the day the people of Ontario threw him and his party out of office, was \$20.5 billion. That has been reported in every audited financial statement of the province of Ontario year in and year out. What was reported from 1999 through 2003—in spite of the fact that they put a debt retirement charge on people's bills, not one penny of that money from 1999 to 2003 was applied to the debt. Why? Because they wanted to try and pretend they were keeping the price—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I know the finance minister knows the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. The member from Peterborough.

Please continue.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I know the finance minister actually knows the facts on this file. You know that the debt retirement charge is to go to the residual stranded debt of \$7.8 billion. You have postponed the date that was supposed to be paid down from 2012 to 2015. You've given no explanation, and families rightly want to know

where the money that they have paid—for some families, over \$100 a year—where did it all go?

We understand your game plan. We've had some insight into Liberal plans. You want to confuse voters, you want to confuse the media when it comes to hydro prices in our province, and now you won't even answer a very simple question. What did you do with the \$7.8 billion? Why don't you come clean, publish it and then put the actual amount on hydro bills so Ontario families have transparency?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: A few more facts: The Leader of the Opposition and his party, when they were in power, set up something called an unfunded liability through the Ontario Electricity Financial Corp.

The leader knows that he's not telling the full story. Every penny of every debt retirement charge since 2004 has gone against that debt.

Interjection: Every cent.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Every cent. We have not changed the mechanism that he and his party set up. So if he's saying that people are confused, it's because of the system they set up, which is still in place. The only thing people are confused about is what he will do to ensure safe, clean, reliable electricity in the future for all Ontarians. That's what they're confused about. No plan, no idea, more of the same—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: This is coming from a finance minister in a party that said they wouldn't raise taxes on Ontario families and then jammed them with tax increase after tax increase after tax increase. This is a party that said that hydro bills would go up 1% and now they're going through the roof for Ontario families and businesses.

The reason why: They brought forward a hidden tax on hydro. They want to do it on natural gas. They have exorbitant subsidies for expensive energy experiments like the sweetheart Samsung deal. Your smart meters have turned into nothing more than tax machines on seniors and Ontario families, and then the debt retirement charge, on top of it all, is not going to its stated purpose of reducing the residual stranded debt.

Now, just a year out from an election campaign, you're suddenly backtracking from your hydro policy. Ontario families won't be fooled. Why are you trying to confuse the families who—

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: We're trying to un-confuse the Leader of the Opposition. Let me use his numbers. He is absolutely right: \$7.8 billion has been collected on the debt retirement charge. Some \$5.7 billion of that decreased the principal and \$1.5 billion of that went to pay the hidden cost of their price freeze, which he has refused to acknowledge in this House. The other thing is it has gone to pay interest.

Later today, we're going to vote for a children's tax credit. We're going to do the right thing in terms of

people having clean, green energy. I invite the Leader of the Opposition to review what you yourself did some 10 years ago. Get with the game. We're going to create a cleaner, safer, more reliable and affordable energy system for our children and grandchildren. That's what's important, not you confusing reality with your stubborn refusal to accept the facts—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. I remind the Minister of Economic Development and the Minister of Health that the debate is to take place in here, not with staff in the chamber behind the Speaker.

New question.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. On at least 55 separate occasions in this Legislature, New Democrats have called on the McGuinty government to take the HST off hydro. On 55 different occasions, the McGuinty Liberals have insisted, to quote the Premier, that "electricity bills are going up" and that providing families with relief would bankrupt the province and shut off the lights. What's the government's position today?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question. We look forward to presenting the fall economic statement in the House tomorrow and I can tell you that it will pursue a direction that we've been following for some time now. While we continue to invest in a modern, clean, reliable electricity system, we also want to be mindful of the impact this is having on household expenses.

Just as we've put forward a children's activity tax credit, an energy and property tax credit that will benefit seniors, a sales tax credit that will benefit families to the tune of \$260 per member—that's \$1,040 for a family of four—we're also mindful of the pressures that our electricity plan is putting on families. Families are saying, "We like clean electricity; we like the fact that it's good for our health; we're concerned about the price"; and we intend to help them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: When the Premier slapped the HST on families, he claimed it would be revenue-neutral; it wouldn't cost them. When he turned to the private sector for our electricity needs, he claimed it would save money. Now he wants families to believe he will save them from the high electricity costs that he in fact created—high energy costs that until, let's say, yesterday he didn't care about. Why would families believe him today?

1050

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I took the opportunity just a moment ago to list the many and various ways in which we are supporting families through tax credits and per-

sonal income tax cuts and the like. But I must say that I am disappointed with the party—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Tick-tock, the clock will run.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I remember a time when the NDP stood for the environment. I remember a time when they stood for shutting down dirty coal. I remember a time when they stood for investing in renewable energy. I remember a time when they stood for new clean and green jobs. I remember a time when they wanted to invest in a reliable electricity system. But, sadly, those times are gone by. I want to reassure Ontario families that those times are here for us. They always will be. We will invest in the system, we will make it cleaner, we will make it more reliable and we will help families with their costs.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have to say that the Premier gets more and more inventive as time goes by. He should recognize that families and seniors have been crying out for help for some time. Now that the government needs help, they suddenly hear them. The same government that slapped the HST on hydro bills and drove up rates with private sector deals now says they'll offer solutions. Premier Gordon Campbell in BC resorted to desperate measures to save himself. Does the Premier think that this measure will save him?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the focus on the issues that my honourable colleague brings, but let's talk about some of the important things that I think are concerns for families.

We have in fact for some time now been putting forward a number of measures to better help families when it comes to their household expenses. I think one of the discouraging things in all this is that the opposition parties fail to support us in this. They say we need to do more to help families, but when it comes to each and every measure that we've put forward, they fail to stand up.

Shortly—later today, in fact—we're going to be voting for third reading on the Children's Activity Tax Credit Act. It's \$50 per child; it's \$100 if you have a couple of kids; it's \$200 when you add it on top of the federal program. We think that's real and meaningful to our families. It's all about ensuring that kids have the opportunity to participate in sports and arts activities and the like. It's a specific example which we're going to give to our parties opposite today to see whether or not they support helping families, and we look forward to seeing their actions.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Peter Tabuns: For the last two months, New Democrats have been telling the stories of people who are struggling to pay their bills and putting their concerns

on the agenda, stories of families like Dick and Francie Wilhelm from Windsor, who write: "Please help two retired seniors on their hydro bills." To those real concerns, the Premier said that hydro bills simply have to go up. Now he has apparently changed his mind. If the Premier was wrong about that, what else was he wrong about?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think we've been very open and honest with Ontarians from the outset. We said that we inherited a system that was in a terrible state of disrepair. We thought that it was important that we bring a responsible approach to ensuring that we had in place reliable electricity, so we invested heavily in new generation and in new transmission, and we're particularly proud of the focus we put on clean electricity, clean energy, because it means jobs, it means better health for our children and our seniors in particular.

You know, there was a study done back in 2005, I believe, which said that dirty electricity, coal-fired electricity, which my friend opposite used to stand against, was costing us \$3 billion in health costs. It meant premature death; it meant a higher rate of hospitalization and breathing problems, especially for children. We are investing in a new system. It's a cleaner system. There are costs associated with that, and we're going to be doing more to help families meet those costs.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The measures that have been reported in the press indicate very clearly that the Premier knows he was wrong, and that suddenly he has to promise action on hydro bills. He has insisted that the HST and his corporate tax giveaways will create jobs. They haven't. Since the Premier is now re-evaluating his deeply held beliefs, can we expect him to change his mind on this as well?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague will know that, as we do some heavy lifting—I think, frankly, our generation has taken this on, and I speak on behalf of all Ontarians here—and as we work to lay a foundation for new economic growth in this post-recession world, we knew it was important that we modernize our tax system. As we did that, we put in place supports for our families, like the personal income tax cut, like the sales tax credit, like our transition benefit—the second instalment will be coming to families in the month of December.

Just as we've helped them as we've moved forward on the HST, we are also determined to help families when it comes to building a modern electricity system. That's what our fall economic statement is all about. It's about acknowledging that, as we do this heavy work, our generation of Ontarians, to invest in a modern, reliable, clean electricity system, there are costs that have to be borne by all of us, but we want to make sure that we're helping families bear those costs.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The Premier has made it clear that his principles can change at any time, whether it's online

gambling or helping families with the high cost of electricity. This government has made a number of risky commitments to expensive nuclear power, to reckless corporate tax cuts and to an unfair sales tax. Can the Premier tell us which of his deeply held beliefs he'll change today?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I want to say that we're never going to stop doing what we think is right for Ontario families. We know that they want us to build a stronger foundation for economic growth. We know that they want us to invest in a clean, modern, reliable electricity system.

But I think where they are concerned is that we've got a new NDP here today. There was a time when they stood against dirty coal; there was a time they'd go to the wall for renewable electricity; there was a time they'd go to the wall for new clean and green jobs. There was a time when they stood for all of those things, but now they've given that up, and we're going to see just how determined they are to support families, because we bring forward our measure tomorrow in the fall economic statement. It will be interesting to see whether or not the NDP stand up in support of more support for Ontario families.

TAXATION

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. Hydro and natural gas stakeholders launched a constitutional challenge of Premier McGuinty's special purposes charge. This charge has been called a hidden tax on hydro and natural gas. At first, the Minister of Energy's plan was to deny the hidden taxes on hydro and natural gas. Then, on November 1 and 2, the minister changed his tune and repeatedly said in this House that the hidden taxes on hydro and natural gas had been scrapped.

If the hidden taxes on hydro and natural gas have been scrapped, why was the Attorney General attending the Ontario Energy Board hearings defending them on November 5? Why was he defending them if they've been scrapped?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm pleased to speak to the issue because it gives me an opportunity to talk about all of the incredible initiatives that this government has taken over the last seven years when it comes to conservation.

We have invested in conservation, and the result is 1,700 megawatts of energy saved across this province. That's billions of dollars of costs that we would have had to accrue in building more energy as we tried to make up for the lack of investment from the party opposite that we inherited seven years ago.

I look forward to bringing forward our long-term energy plan. In our long-term energy plan, I'm quite confident you will see that Ontario will continue to be a North American leader in conservation. Conservation will continue to be a part of our long-term energy future here in the province of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: They just continually try to confuse the Ontario public, but they will not be fooled. A pattern has developed where Premier McGuinty is trying to confuse Ontario families about what they're going to pay for his expensive energy experiments.

He told Ontario families that his smart meter tax machines would save them money. We know they don't. He confuses the \$7.8-billion debt Ontario families are paying with a larger unfunded liability so he can keep collecting debt retirement charges.

Even the Attorney General is confused. He is still pursuing a hidden tax grab on hydro and natural gas that the Minister of Energy has repeated time and time again was scrapped. Is the Attorney General defending the hidden hydro and natural gas taxes because you're planning to bring them back later?

1100

Hon. Brad Duguid: This is the government—one of the first governments; maybe the only government in a long, long time in this province—that has been very honest with Ontarians when it comes to the need to invest in our energy system. We know that those investments come at a cost. I think what Ontarians need to know is, where do the Tories stand on this? Do they support our investments in building a stronger energy system, investing in new generation? Apparently not: They certainly do not support those investments. Do they support our investments in building a cleaner energy system, cleaning our air and improving our health? There are important investments if we want to build a stronger, cleaner energy system. We stand squarely behind those investments. Do they support the investments we've made to build a more reliable system of energy? Clearly, they do not. I look forward to contrasting our energy plan with their lack of a plan over the course of the next number of—

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

RETIREMENT HOMES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. We read with complete horror the gross financial and personal mistreatment of vulnerable seniors at a Toronto retirement home. These frightened, hungry, and nearly destitute seniors cried out for help and nobody heard them. The safeguards that were supposed to be protecting their health and financial security are too little, too late. Now, some are dead; many of them are left with nothing. Will the Premier commit to establishing, right now, an arm's-length system which these vulnerable seniors can turn to for help?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The minister responsible for seniors.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: Thank you for the question. This is absolutely a very important question because, on this side of the House, the government is committed to protecting our seniors. This situation is another reason why it is so important that our registry system that we are creating is important to move forward. We are on track

and we are going to continue moving forward. For the first time in 20 years, we're creating the Retirement Homes Act. That, specifically, will help seniors who are living in retirement homes, especially when it comes to the care that they receive or to strengthening the protections that they'll be receiving, including if there is any kind of abuse, whether it is financial—we're going to make sure that we protect them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary? The member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I would like to go back to the Premier. The Toronto Star investigation shed light on seniors who were neglected, malnourished and robbed in a retirement home, and no one would investigate their complaints. They had nowhere to turn to until the Toronto Star started doing the investigation and exposed an industry that has regularly defied the existing laws and violated the trust of those people. Bill 21, the Retirement Homes Act, will do nothing to change this. It will leave it up to the industry to police itself. There are more and more vulnerable and high-need residents ending up in retirement homes because Bill 21 does not put a limit on the level of care that can be provided in the retirement home.

My question: How is this possible in 2010? How is it possible that seniors are abused, starved and robbed and have nowhere to appeal their treatment, with or without Bill 21?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: Again, the seriousness of that Toronto Star investigation was extremely important, but it also was very disturbing. That is why we are committed to continue moving forward on the Retirement Homes Act. It is extremely important that we do not stop and start with new legislation. We have a Retirement Homes Act that is going to protect our seniors. We are doing everything we possibly can right now.

Some of the things that we are doing: The new Retirement Homes Act, which is going to be moving forward, is going to protect seniors by compliance with safety and care standards in all retirement homes. We're going to register all retirement homes. We will go in and inspect retirement homes. The establishment of a regulatory authority to license and inspect homes is also going to create a bill of rights to protect residents' rights. At the end of the day, protecting our seniors is our number one priority, and we're going to continue with our Retirement Homes Act.

INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL GRADUATES

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. My constituents in Mississauga–Brampton South are comprised greatly of recent immigrants. Some of them have received their medical training abroad. These international medical graduates come to Canada with the hopes of applying their training to practice, but too often those skills are not recognized in Ontario. Minister, can you tell this House

what our government is doing to help these international medical graduates in my riding and across the province?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member from Mississauga–Brampton South for the question. She is absolutely correct: For far too long, too many internationally trained doctors have not had their credentials recognized here in Ontario. It's an issue we've taken very seriously, and we've taken important steps to correct the problem.

According to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, the total number of certificates issued to IMGs in the past decade has increased by an unprecedented 119%. In 2004-05, we more than doubled the number of residency spaces for IMGs, from 90 to 200 a year, but in 2008-09, we surpassed our own target and offered 224 residency spots. In 2009-10, a total of 221 positions were offered.

We're currently supporting over 700 international medical—

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

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Minister, I believe that when newcomers succeed, Ontario succeeds. I know some communities in Ontario have had difficulties recruiting and retaining doctors. At the same time, there are international medical graduates seeking to practise. Are any innovative solutions being proposed or implemented that address both these concerns simultaneously?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We have more than 5,800 international medical graduates practising in Ontario. That's almost a quarter of the physician workforce. These physicians are a big part of the reason we've been able to attach more than one million Ontarians to primary health care.

But nowhere in the province is the challenge of access to care greater than in northern Ontario. That's why we introduced the northern and rural recruitment and retention initiative, the NRRR program. It provides direct financial incentives to physicians who practise in the north and in our most rural communities. These are the communities that have faced the biggest challenges in recruiting physicians.

In addition, the postgraduate return of service program opens the door to international medical graduates who agree to practise for five years, anywhere in Ontario outside of Toronto and Ottawa, in exchange for postgraduate—

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

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Minister of Health. In recent media reports, Dr. Robert Cushman, CEO of the Champlain LHIN, indicated he is looking to Mississauga hospitals for best practices on how to slash emergency room wait times. My question is: How soon before Ottawa patients will be seeing garages used as emergency rooms, just like Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Stop the clock. Ministers, order.

Minister?

1110

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am appalled that the opposition would employ the tactic that they are employing.

Interjection: They continue to do it.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: They continue with their drive-by smear campaign of the professionals who work in our health care system.

I visited Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga. I'm not sure anyone from that caucus has visited the hospital. I spoke to front-line health care providers. I spoke to the emergency department nurses and doctors who showed me exactly what happened in Credit Valley Hospital. To suggest for one moment that patient safety was compromised is a complete fabrication. They are making it up. It is—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I don't need your help.

The member will withdraw the comment that she made, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: This is in no way a smear with respect to Credit Valley Hospital. What it is is an indictment of the complete failure of the McGuinty health care policies, which have resulted in 190 nurses being cut at the Ottawa Hospital. And now emergency room wait times are up, despite the best efforts of what's being done at the hospitals.

What I would like to know from the minister is what you are planning to do when hospitals are being forced to use substandard facilities for emergency rooms because of your lack of policy.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: For the party opposite to be arguing that infrastructure investments haven't been made, haven't been adequate, is completely laughable. I would compare our infrastructure investments against the ones you made when you were in office. You closed hospitals; we're opening hospitals. Let me tell you, Speaker, if they have their way, they're going to cut \$3 billion out of health care, and trust me, infrastructure expenditures will come to a screeching halt.

It's no coincidence that their members are advocating for hospitals to be included in infrastructure capital plans, because if they get their plan, there will be no more construction in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): New question? The member from Nickel Belt.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. I don't like it because I can't hear, and neither can our guests who are watching today.

New question.

ASSISTIVE DEVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée.

In the Legislature this morning, we are joined by many small business owners who supply Ontarians with medically necessary assistive devices such as wheelchairs or oxygen. Those business owners are frustrated with the extraordinary delays at the ministry's assistive devices program. The ministry is forcing small business owners to wait up to six months for payment. They have to supply the device, and then they wait and wait and wait and wait for payment to come. This is causing financial ruin for operators and placing Ontarians' access to those devices in jeopardy.

How has the minister allowed the ADP to become such the crisis it is today?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: In the supplementary, I'll address the issue of what we are doing to clean up the backlog, and I do acknowledge that there has been a delay in payment for some of the vendors in this program. But let's just pause for a minute and think about what we've done in the assistive devices program. We're serving almost 70,000 more Ontarians than when we took office in 2003. We've added insulin pumps, we've added related supplies and oxygen saturation monitors to the list of funded supplies. We've nearly doubled funding on the assistive devices program to almost \$400 million.

We are there for people who need the equipment. This significant expansion has created some backlogs, and I'm more than happy to discuss that in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It looks to me like the government is quite happy to have their new program funded on the backs of small business owners who have to put the services and the devices forward but don't get paid.

The member from Welland was the first one who brought this issue to the attention of the minister and told her that a crisis was growing. Just this week, a business with locations in Hamilton, Mississauga and Toronto went into receivership, and there are many more that are barely surviving—they're right here if you'd like to talk to them. It is unconscionable that small businesses are facing bankruptcy because the ministry is so slow at paying them.

What is the minister's plan for getting the program up and running, so that those people here and the many more in Ontario get the payment that is due to them in a timely manner?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This is an issue that we are aware of, and we are taking that action. In fact, we have now doubled the number of people working in the claims review department. We are actually getting that backlog reduced, and we are on our way to where we want to be in getting speedy payment to the vendors. We're introducing an automatic approval of invoices, and we're combining applications to further streamline the process. We're also working on a new IT system.

We acknowledge that our partners in the assistive devices program deserve to be treated in a responsible way and we're working to rectify that situation.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Education. In my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham, there are 48 elementary schools and nine high schools. With this many students, it's hardly surprising that my constituents are concerned about keeping our students safe, and they ask what role they can play to help.

I know there a number of initiatives that have been put forward by this government to make schools safer. Bullying is a serious issue that can impact all students. Parents in my riding feel that schools should be places where positive examples of how people should behave toward one another are reinforced.

Minister, with schools having such a key role to play in the development of students' attitudes towards one another, what is this government doing to recognize the work of schools that are making a real effort in this regard?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I very much appreciate the question, especially since this is bullying awareness and prevention week. We have students in our gallery, so I think it's important that they know we do talk about the issue of bullying. It is a very serious one.

I've had the opportunity to be in schools over these weeks. I certainly understand first-hand that staff, students and their families are working very hard to deal with this issue in a substantive way. That is why today, we will be announcing that there will be a new award to recognize the exceptional and innovative work that's being done throughout Ontario to foster safe and inclusive schools.

Now, the Premier's Safe Schools Awards will recognize up to 10 safe school teams who have achieved outstanding results with their programs and initiatives. I think this is a very positive thing that we are doing to reinforce our message again—

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Constituents in my riding have contacted my office regarding the announcement that was made yesterday at a high school where programs were announced regarding new safety-at-school initiatives. With the recent scare because of a number of home invasions that have happened in Markham, my constituents want to make sure that their children are safe while they're at school, as well as in their homes. Will the minister tell the House how the partnership with the broader community helps keep students safe at school?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: Keeping students safe at school is an important issue for everyone within the school and within our community. That is why yesterday, I was very happy to have been joined by the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. We were in a school and we talked about new funding for safe

school grants. These will help strengthen partnerships with police services in our communities to again focus on student safety and appropriate student activity.

Schools will have the opportunity to work, in this case, with police services in their area, to make those connections, to implement and employ strategies that will keep students informed about what bullying is, why it's inappropriate and, when they encounter it, what they should do, where they should go and how we can continue to make our schools safer places for everyone to be.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question today is for the Attorney General and is similar to a question I asked a year ago to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Today, we welcome the Police Association of Ontario. Welcome to you guys. They are here for their annual lobby day. Your SIU director, Ian Scott, has made public comments that clearly show a lack of respect and bias toward our outstanding and committed police officers, the very men and women he is to oversee and investigate. In a Toronto Star article from October 28, 2010, he says, "Police officers get all kinds of breaks in the (criminal justice) system."

Minister, do you agree that comments made by the SIU director can be taken as direct criticism of the Attorney General, crown counsels, prosecutors and judges?

1120

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Everyone who comes before our system of justice, whether it's the investigative stage or the court stage, has the right, whether they are the complainant or the subject of an investigation, to be treated impartially, fairly, and reasonably.

The SIU was set up decades ago to help achieve those principles when the police were the subject, or potentially the subject, of an investigation. Now, for decades there have been issues, there have been reports and there have been suggestions through all governments, and sometimes these bubble over.

Several months ago, we asked Chief Justice LeSage to work with all of the parties to see if we could advance a resolution to some of these long-standing issues. I've asked him to undertake the second stage of that review, to get a fair, long-standing resolution to these very important—

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Minister, given the SIU director's comments in the Toronto Star article of October 28, how can a police officer being investigated by the SIU expect to be investigated in a fair and impartial manner?

The PAO believes, and this PC caucus believes, that the government needs to restore confidence in the SIU. Will you take immediate action, intervene, and hold the SIU director, Ian Scott, accountable to this province?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I and all members of the Legislature welcome the Police Association representatives to the Legislature. We thank them for what they do. We thank them for the risks they take every single day in defending us and our communities and the people of our communities.

These issues have been around for decades. The SIU director is independent. And sometimes, we will all recognize, the challenge in making public comments is that they can be interpreted many different ways by many different people.

We have asked former Chief Justice LeSage to work with all the parties to come forward with a resolution to issues that have been around for decades, very strongly held issues. I thank him for the work that he is doing and I look forward to the hope for a resolution.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Every day, more and more service employees, from bartenders to servers to valets, have contacted me and my office pleading for the egregious tip-out practice to end. If I'm getting those calls, so is the minister. A valet who works at a high-end Niagara Falls hotel and casino to support himself through university stated the following: "In my hotel, valets' tips are collected and distributed among the management. They are not documented or reported."

When will this minister begin to understand that tips are in fact wages, and do something, anything, other than mouth platitudes on how hard these people work?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: First I want to thank the member for having brought forward his private member's bill. I want to commend him on that and allowing for this matter to be debated in the House. It is being debated, and we are hearing from many different stakeholders. We continue to consult and engage with stakeholders.

As the member said, we understand how hard those hospitality workers work and the service that they provide and the value to this province of Ontario, where we know that tourism is a great economic driver here for our province.

I will continue to meet with those workers, to consult with those workers. We've brought forward many, many protections since coming to government in 2003 to better protect all of our workers, especially our most vulnerable workers, and we will continue to do so.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: Every time I ask this question or a question like this, I hear no answer at all, no real commitment to fix this massive problem. Tens of thousands of workers have their money stolen from them every day. Owners and managers don't declare this income and pay no taxes on it. If they are challenged, they threaten the staff with firing or loss of hours. It happens every day.

The valet who wrote to me said this: "I have calculated a personal loss of thousands of dollars that could have been used towards my education." Why won't this

minister agree it's time to take action, pass Bill 114 or at least put in your own bill that will deal with it?

Hon. Peter Fonseca: I think the member should stop and refrain from smearing thousands of business owners across the province.

When it comes to employment standards, let's look at our record on protecting workers, especially our most vulnerable workers. Between 1989 and 2003, there were only 97 prosecutions initiated under the Employment Standards Act. Since then, 2004 forward, we have had over 1,800 prosecutions initiated. That shows where we stand when it comes to protecting our most vulnerable workers.

I look forward to the continued debate on this matter through the private member's bill. Also, I have looked into another matter; the private member asked about a letter that had been written to the ministry. We have gotten that information. There was a letter sent to that constituent. I can say that to the member at this time.

POLICE SERVICES

Mr. Phil McNeely: My question today is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The province of Ontario is home to some of the world's top police services. Across our province, we have thousands of dedicated, well-trained police officers who put their personal safety on the line each and every day in order to keep Ontario families safe. On behalf of the members of this House, I would like to personally extend a warm welcome to the Police Association of Ontario, an organization that represents over 33,000 police and civilian members from every Ontario municipal police association, and the Ontario Provincial Police Association.

I recall a time when budgets were being slashed across Ontario's justice system, but across-the-board government cutbacks meant fewer police officers patrolling Ontario streets. Ontarians are concerned about public safety. Could the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services explain what the government is doing to support Ontario's police officers?

Hon. James J. Bradley: That's a very good question. This government has been working tirelessly with our partners in the law enforcement community to make Ontario an even safer place in which to live. Today in Ontario, there are more than 2,000 more police officers working to keep our communities safe. Many of these new officers have been placed on the front lines, patrolling communities across the province day and night.

Additional officers have been placed in dedicated units to address key priority areas such as youth crime, organized crime, dangerous offenders and domestic violence. Dozens more have been placed with the provincial guns and gangs task force, a highly successful \$51-million strategy that is working to tackle gun violence and other gang-related crime in the GTA. We've also increased the number of police officers in our remote First Nations communities. We are moving forward—

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

Mr. Phil McNeely: In their 2006 election platform, the federal Conservative government promised to put an additional 2,500 police officers on Canadian streets. At the time this was a welcome commitment, not only in my riding of Ottawa–Orléans, but across the province of Ontario.

It has been brought to my attention that the federal government has fallen short on its promise by providing Ontario with only a fraction of the funding that was promised in the federal Conservative 2006 platform.

To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services: Can you explain what Ontario is doing with its share of the federal funds, and further, what steps Ontario is taking to hold the federal Conservatives to their election promise?

1130

Hon. James J. Bradley: The member is correct. The police officers recruitment fund program—

Interjections.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: The police officers recruitment fund program that was established in the 2008 federal budget has fallen far short of the federal Conservatives' election promise. The program we have today provides only a fraction of the funding that is required to put 2,500 police officers on the streets. Further, the program is time-limited; it will end in just two years' time.

That said, the House will be pleased to know that Ontario is the only province that has dedicated every last dime of its portion of the program to front-line police officers. There are 125 new OPP officers, 164 municipal police officers and 40 new officers for First Nations communities.

Last month, Ontario stood, along with our PAO, and led the charge at the annual meeting of the—

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

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, why are you pursuing closer relations and increased trade with Syria while its authoritarian government provides refuge for terrorists?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I thank the member opposite for the question. I certainly understand that, as is the role of this government, we pursue trade negotiations and improved trade with a number of countries around the world.

I'm not specifically aware of the specific aspects of your question with regard to that country in question, but I will say that, as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, we welcome individuals from all across the world, including many individuals who have their country of origin as Syria.

We have a strong and vibrant Syrian-Canadian population residing here in Ontario. I certainly am, and I know that this government is as well, very proud of the contributions that that community has made, both to businesses that are thriving in this province as well as to increasing trade and bringing future growth and prosperity to this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: According to media reports, the minister was a guest of a Syrian government official at a luncheon to promote trade with Syria. Syria is an authoritarian—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. We're perhaps 40 days from Christmas. Maybe the Speaker needs to start the list of who has been naughty or nice and give some people some early Christmas vacations.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Please continue.

Mr. Steve Clark: Syria is an authoritarian state that sponsors terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah. Hamas leader Khaled Mashal operates out of a well-protected Syrian compound, and Syria has been referred to in the media by some as an errand boy for Iran and Hezbollah.

The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration has shown remarkably bad judgment. Does the minister regret his show of support for a nation that considers itself at war with Israel, one of Canada's strongest allies and the only mature democracy in the Middle East?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think this is a very important piece of information that we need to make sure that Ontario residents understand.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order.

Minister?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think it's important that Ontario residents understand that our government, our ministry, is prepared to go around the world to bring jobs back to Ontario and to encourage our Ontario companies to do business with the world.

The member opposite will know full well that we spent, just a couple of months ago, time discovering opportunities in Israel, in the West Bank and in Lebanon. Following, four weeks later, was a visit from the industry minister for Lebanon. We have active groups who are searching the world for infrastructure projects, in particular across the Middle East, where we are increasing our level of activity.

We understand that these governments are looking for opportunities to work with very good Ontario companies to increase infrastructure in their own country so they can see the kinds of opportunities that we've enjoyed in Ontario for many decades already.

So if this opposite member—

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

TAXATION

Mr. Howard Hampton: My question is for the Minister of Revenue. There are literally thousands of cabins, cottages and homes, and many tourist resorts, on Lake of the Woods and Rainy Lake. Most of them use propane to meet their energy needs. Sometimes the propane is delivered by truck, where there is road access; sometimes it is delivered by barge over the water, where there is no road access. It has come to the attention of people that American companies are saying to people who live on the lake, "Use us as your supplier of propane, and you will not have to pay the HST."

Can the minister explain why companies that operate out of Kenora or Fort Frances have to charge the HST, but companies based in Minnesota are providing this service in Canada without charging the HST?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I thank the member for that question, and he's right: We all use propane in some form, and a lot of people who live up north do use propane; it's an important thing for all of us. But what the member should know is that any company that is selling goods or services in the province must collect all the federal and provincial taxes, including the HST. So I am unaware of that specific situation, but I will definitely follow up with the CRA and see exactly what is going on, and we will investigate.

But the fact is, what we are doing for businesses when it comes to our tax reform package is that we have created a business-friendly environment. We're helping businesses, building stronger businesses for our communities, and when businesses succeed, people succeed: They get jobs, and we invest in businesses—

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

Mr. Howard Hampton: Well, I would say this: The McGuinty government has certainly made it business-friendly for the propane operators operating out of Baudette, Minnesota, and International Falls, Minnesota, but you're putting the operators based in Kenora and Fort Frances out of business. That's what is happening.

But it is more serious than that, because people are now asking, "Do these companies meet the technical and safety standards of the TSSA?" They've raised that issue, and they have not received a very good response from your government on that issue either.

Companies operating out of Fort Frances and Kenora have to meet the TSSA standards and they have to charge the HST, but it seems that for American companies doing business in Ontario, that's not a requirement. What is your government going to do about it?

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: The member brings up a very important question. I did say that I will follow up with the CRA regarding an investigation. We know that all companies that are selling any goods or services in

our province have to collect all federal and provincial taxes, including the HST.

We have a tax plan, and the tax plan is a great tax plan. I just wish the opposition would see that.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Energy concerning hidden taxes. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY TAX CREDIT ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT POUR LES ACTIVITÉS DES ENFANTS

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of Bill 99, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement the children's activity tax credit / Projet de loi 99, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts pour mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour les activités des enfants.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1139 to 1144.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Elliott, Christine	Mitchell, Carol
Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Fonseca, Peter	Murdoch, Bill
Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Murray, Glen R.
Bailey, Robert	Gélinas, France	Naqvi, Yasir
Balkissoon, Bas	Gravelle, Michael	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Hampton, Howard	Oraziotti, David
Bartolucci, Rick	Hardeman, Ernie	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bentley, Christopher	Hoskins, Eric	Pendergast, Leeanna
Best, Margaret	Hoy, Pat	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Hudak, Tim	Prue, Michael
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Pupatello, Sandra
Brown, Michael A.	Johnson, Rick	Ramal, Khalil
Caplan, David	Jones, Sylvia	Ramsay, David
Carroll, Aileen	Kormos, Peter	Rinaldi, Lou
Chan, Michael	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLeod, Lisa	Sergio, Mario
Clark, Steve	Mangat, Amrit	Shurman, Peter
Colle, Mike	Marchese, Rosario	Smith, Monique
Crozier, Bruce	Martiniuk, Gerry	Sousa, Charles
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dickson, Joe	McGuinty, Dalton	Van Bommel, Maria
Dombrowsky, Leona	McNeely, Phil	Wilkinson, John
Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Norm	Yakubski, John
Dunlop, Garfield	Milloy, John	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 80; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): We have a deferred vote on the motion by Ms. Smith for allocation of time on Bill 172, An Act to amend the Ticket Speculation Act.

Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1147 to 1152.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members, please take their seats.

On November 16, Ms. Smith moved government notice of motion number 33. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Duguid, Brad	Murray, Glen R.
Albanese, Laura	Duncan, Dwight	Naqvi, Yasir
Arthurs, Wayne	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Oraziotti, David
Balkissoon, Bas	Fonseca, Peter	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bartolucci, Rick	Gerretsen, John	Phillips, Gerry
Bentley, Christopher	Gravelle, Michael	Pupatello, Sandra
Best, Margaret	Hoskins, Eric	Ramal, Khalil
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Ramsay, David
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Michael A.	Johnson, Rick	Ruprecht, Tony
Caplan, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Sandals, Liz
Carroll, Aileen	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Chan, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Monique
Chiarelli, Bob	Mathews, Deborah	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	McGuinty, Dalton	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	McNeely, Phil	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wilkinson, John
Dickson, Joe	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Mitchell, Carol	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hampton, Howard	Miller, Norm
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Paul
Barrett, Toby	Hillier, Randy	Munro, Julia
Chudleigh, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Murdoch, Bill
Clark, Steve	Kormos, Peter	O'Toole, John
Dunlop, Garfield	MacLeod, Lisa	Prue, Michael
Elliott, Christine	Marchese, Rosario	Shurman, Peter
Gélinas, France	Martiniuk, Gerry	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 56; the nays are 24.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): There being no further business, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1156 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I would like to introduce some guests in the members' gallery today. I want to welcome Will Falk, Cheryl Appell and Robin Cardozo, three members of the expert panel on infertility and adoption. We also have with us here today Mary Ballantyne, Keith Sparling, Virginia Rowden and Rory Gleeson from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies. They're joining us today as we recognize Adoption Awareness Month. Welcome to all of you.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I ask all members to join me as we welcome to the Speaker's gallery today guests here for the tribute to be held for Leo Edward Bernier, member of the 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd and 33rd Parliaments.

Joining us in the Speaker's gallery are Don Bernier, Claire Bernier, Jacqueline Bernier, Michael Bernier, Alex Bernier, John Bernier, Karen Cast, Butch Cast, Alyssa Cast, Robert Cast, Anna Cast, Robert McCaig, Janet Taylor, Bill Morris, Joanne Morris, Gord Warren and Karen Warren. Welcome all to Queen's Park today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

FOOD BANKS

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yesterday, Food Banks Canada released its report titled HungerCount 2010. This report is a comprehensive analysis of hunger and food bank use in Canada.

The report's findings are simply alarming: Hundreds of thousands of Ontarians continue to struggle daily to make ends meet and simply cannot make it through the month without the assistance of their local food bank. As a result, Ontario's food banks are being stretched too far, and many are scrambling to keep food on the shelves and their doors open for their local communities.

HungerCount 2010 specifically tracked the usage of Ontario food banks during the month of March 2010. In March alone, over 402,000 Ontarians used the service of an Ontario food bank in order to meet their basic needs. This is an increase of almost 8% over the last year alone and a whopping 28% since 2008. The most troubling of all is that 37% of those using Ontario food banks are children. That's 150,000 Ontario children in 2009 alone. This is the result of this government's so-called poverty reduction strategy.

My bill, Bill 78, a bill to fight hunger with local food, will provide a tax credit for farmers who donate their excess produce to local food banks. Estimates suggest that in the first year alone, Bill 78 would yield an additional five million pounds of fresh produce for Ontario's food banks and cost the province almost nothing.

Each and every day, Ontario's food banks are challenged to meet the needs of our province's most vulnerable. It's time this government moved—

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

VETERANS

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'd like to speak in reference to Remembrance Day week. I acknowledge a lot of people who assisted me: MP Dan McTeague; MP Mark Holland; MPP Wayne Arthurs; Mayors Ryan and Parish; councillors from both municipalities, William Tighe and Dave Johnson; and my wife, Donna, who assisted me.

The month of November is about remembering those who suffered and those who made the supreme sacrifice so that we may be free.

With special recognition to the men and women of Ajax Legion, branch 322, Claremont Legion, branch 483, and Bay Ridges-Pickering Legion, branch 606, we had the honour of attending some 14 events.

Friday, November 5: With Dan McTeague, we attended the Tony Stacey Centre for Veterans Care fundraiser at the Ajax Convention Centre.

November 6: We showed support at the Remembrance Day dinner at the Bay Ridges Legion.

November 7: We supported all three Remembrance Day activities, and that was both of the Ajax and Pickering Remembrance parades, wreath-laying ceremonies at St. Paul's United Church, Claremont Remembrance Day prayer service, and wreath-laying and prayers at the Pickering Memorial. As well, Bay Ridges Legion, Claremont Legion and Veterans Fellowship events were held.

November 10—oh, gosh, I'm really short on time. There were so many events. I can only comment by closing that there was a total of 14 events, the last, of course, Remembrance Day. The final dinner on November 14 included MP Holland, Mayor Parish and our wives, Donna, Rose and Cindy.

We shall never forget.

WIND TURBINES

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: Hundreds of people in my community have signed a petition, which I'll be tabling in the House later today, expressing their discontent with the proposed plan by Walmart to install an 80-foot, 20-kilowatt wind turbine at its Fairview Street location in Burlington.

This government's Green Energy Act has sidestepped municipalities' abilities to make decisions which affect their municipalities and their residents. My concern is that the proper standards and criteria are not in place to ensure that the benefits of wind turbine projects are measured against negative effects in the community. The Ministry of Energy enforces the Green Energy Act. The Ministry of the Environment is responsible for the approvals process.

Let me put it plain and simple. The Big Brother ways of this government haven't allowed for any recourse. They have become so out of touch and arrogant that they no longer feel the need to listen to their constituents. But I'm listening to my constituents, and they are clear. They

don't want Walmart's proposed wind turbine in Burlington.

This government must begin respecting the vision that local residents have for their community and allow for a credible process that includes municipal and community input before any final provincial decisions are made.

Interjections.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: It's clear that the government is touchy about this, Mr. Speaker.

LOUIS RIEL DAY

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise to commemorate that yesterday was Louis Riel Day here on the legislative grounds. There were hundreds of people who came out in what was probably the most pleasant of all the 10 years that I have attended that particular celebration. It is held at the statue of the Northwest Rebellion, which members of the Legislature will know is on the east side of Queen's Park Circle. The statue is there to commemorate those who were sent from Ontario and who died in what was then called the Northwest Rebellion. Yesterday was the 125th anniversary of the death of Louis Riel who, as we all know, was hanged for treason, but it was the 75th anniversary of the founding of the statue. Ontario erected that statue for those who had died at Batoche and other places in defence of what was Canada.

1510

But it is an irony today that the descendants and the followers of Louis Riel and their families were there. There was a poster of Riel. The people were all wearing the coloured sash. Fiddles were playing and speeches were made. History has indeed been very kind to Louis Riel. Some now even suggest he may have been a father of Confederation, and certainly, if he was not that, he was at least the father of multiculturalism in Canada, because he stood up his whole life for minorities.

We were very proud to see Branch 10 of the Royal Canadian Legion, who were there to honour it as well, and my congratulations to members of all parties who stood up to make a speech and to commemorate that great man.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Phil McNeely: Clean water is vital to our well-being, which is why our government is actively working to conserve this valuable resource for future generations. We have already successfully made Ontario's water some of the best protected in the world and spurred innovative made-in-Ontario clean water technologies.

The McGuinty government continues to take the steps needed to make Ontario the leading clean water jurisdiction in North America. The proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act will encourage the creation and export of innovative clean water technology, promote water conservation, attract economic development and create local jobs. This water opportunities strategy will help focus industry to become more water-

efficient and develop an export sector, which is a key element of our Open Ontario plan.

Our goal is for Ontario to become a hotbed of innovation, scientific expertise and commercial activity in clean water technology and water conservation techniques. We will continue to work with industry, post-secondary institutions and entrepreneurs to attract clean water jobs, expertise and investment while creating a culture of investment in Ontario. Ontario has the ability to be a major player for water and waste water technology on the global stage.

The McGuinty government recognizes our province's potential and will continue to provide the leadership needed to ensure Ontario's long-term sustainability and growth.

BULLYING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK

Mr. John O'Toole: This week, schools across my riding will be putting on a campaign to stop bullying. This week is Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week for the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board.

In the information age, bullying has increasingly taken on many different forms. No longer is bullying simply physical or verbal; it is now social and electronic as well. Cyber-bullying, through text messaging, Facebook, MSN and other electronic venues, is just as harmful to a child as being pushed around in the playground.

Throughout the week, schools will be holding a variety of events to raise student awareness about bullying and to stomp it out. Clarke High School student council is leading a poster campaign and hosting individual classroom discussions on the topic of anti-bullying. Courtice Secondary School's Courtice Players will be showcasing an interactive performance on bullying at school and around the area in the community. Orono Public School will be kicking off their peaceful playground program, having a poetry contest and hosting a bullying awareness booth.

I wish to commend not just the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, but the student leaders themselves, for their work towards awareness and ending bullying in our schools and indeed in our communities. Bullying destroys the safe and caring learning environment that all our children deserve.

I ask my colleagues to support these initiatives in their own ridings and work towards bully-free schools—as well in this very Legislature.

NORTHERN HIGHWAYS

Mr. David Oraziotti: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to share a piece of great news on Ontario's road system for northern Ontario motorists. Recently, the Canadian Automobile Association rated the top 20 roads in Ontario, and five of those roads are located in northern Ontario.

Since 2003, our government invested more than \$25 million in improving roads in my riding of Sault Ste.

Marie alone, and this year Carmen's Way and Wellington Street were listed on the CAA's top 20 best roads in Ontario. Other roads from northern Ontario that made the top 20 are located in Sudbury, including Highway 144 and Falconbridge Road.

Significant improvement in road safety has also been made on Highway 69. Since 2003, we have invested almost \$700 million to improve conditions on Highway 69 between Port Severn and Sudbury. We have committed a total of \$2.4 billion for this section of northern highway. Some of the improvements made to Highway 69 since 2003 include: four-laning several sections, the laying of rumble strips to improve driver alertness and the installation of more passing lanes.

Other initiatives to improve road safety include: mandatory speed limiters on trucks, a ban on using hand-held electronics while driving, zero blood alcohol levels for young drivers and stringent anti-street racing laws. Previous governments downloaded responsibility for provincial highways to municipalities and failed to four-lane Highway 69 and improve safety for motorists.

I'm very pleased that we're spending over \$773 million to improve northern highways for residents in the province of Ontario.

GO TRANSIT

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Last Friday, I was pleased to welcome Minister Wynne to Guelph to announce that GO rail service will be arriving in Guelph by the end of 2011. This is very welcome news to my constituents, who have been looking forward to the return of GO rail service to Guelph ever since the train was cancelled by the NDP in 1993. Trains will continue on to Kitchener—and that is a first—where a layover will be constructed for overnight train storage.

At events I attended over the weekend, my constituents expressed their strong support of this initiative. We're delighted to learn that the service will include two morning trains to Toronto Union Station and two return afternoon trains. The GO rail service will complement the existing VIA schedule, providing commuters in my community with more options.

This announcement will build on the GO Transit investments made in September 2007, when GO began a new GO bus service between the University of Guelph and Mississauga. Not only will the \$18-million investment in trains help get cars off the road, this project will create approximately 180 design and construction jobs.

I'm proud to be part of a government that understands that better public transit means a better quality of life for Ontario families.

ST. PETER'S SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mr. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, you know that on many occasions, I've risen in this House to brag about my riding of Peterborough. I'm very proud of the residents of Peterborough riding and their many accomplishments.

Today is no different, because today I'm going to brag about St. Peter's Secondary School, which became the first school in Canada to raise \$1 million for the cancer foundation.

How did the students and staff at St. Peter's Catholic secondary school raise this amount of money? It was through their commitment to the annual Terry Fox run. Each year, the teachers and staff reward the students by having their faces shoved in bowls of spaghetti, shaving their heads or dyeing their beards rainbow colours. This year they did not disappoint: As the total raised for 2010 neared almost \$100,000, their best year to date, teachers and staff dressed up and performed Michael Jackson's Thriller video, much to the delight of the students. These young people, their teachers and families have embraced the spirit of Terry Fox and his drive to raise money for cancer research.

We have all felt the impact of cancer in our lives: if not personally, then through family members and friends. This year is the 30th anniversary of the Terry Fox Marathon of Hope. This annual event has raised approximately \$500 million worldwide for cancer research. Today, I stand to pay tribute to the legacy of this fine young man and to the students of St. Peter's Secondary School in Peterborough.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MUNICIPAL RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL SURGE PROTECTOR ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR L'INSTALLATION DE PARASURTENSEURS RÉSIDENTIELS ET COMMERCIAUX DANS LES MUNICIPALITÉS

Mr. Lalonde moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 134, An Act to amend the Building Code Act, 1992, the City of Toronto Act, 2006 and the Municipal Act, 2001 with respect to surge protectors in new residential and commercial buildings / Projet de loi 134, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1992 sur le code du bâtiment, la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto et la Loi de 2001 sur les municipalités à l'égard de l'installation de parasurtenseurs dans les nouveaux immeubles d'habitation et les nouveaux immeubles commerciaux.

1520

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde: This bill is to authorize municipalities to pass bylaws requiring the installation of surge protectors in new residential and commercial buildings. The chief building official shall refuse to issue

a building permit if a proposed building does not comply with such a bylaw. The bylaws which may be passed with respect to residential and commercial buildings for which building permit applications are made on or after May 1, 2011, prevail over any act or regulation. Surge protectors that are required to be installed by the bylaw must comply with standards specified in the building code.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Gerry Phillips: Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

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

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 49 be waived.

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

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

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move that the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs be authorized to meet during the week of January 24, 2011, in London, Windsor, Thunder Bay, Timmins and Ottawa, and to meet in Toronto on Monday, January 31, 2011, and in Toronto on Tuesday, February 1, 2011, for the purpose of conducting pre-budget consultations.

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

Motion agreed to.

SIGN-LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding sign-language interpreters for certain proceedings.

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

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move that during the introduction of visitors, oral questions, and members' statements on Tuesday, November 30, 2010, sign-language interpreters may be present on the floor of the chamber to interpret the proceedings to guests in the gallery.

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

Motion agreed to.

LEO BERNIER

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allocated to each party to speak in remembrance of the late Leo Bernier.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.
The member from Kenora—Rainy River.

Mr. Howard Hampton: On behalf of Andrea Horwath and Ontario's New Democrats, I'm pleased to be able to pay tribute to the memory of a great northerner and a great Ontarian, Leo Bernier.

I knew Mr. Bernier personally. In fact, I can say that I knew him up close and personal in election campaigns. There used to be the constituency of Rainy River and there used to be the constituency of Kenora. Mr. Bernier was elected from Kenora. However, at election time he would frequently come to the constituency of Rainy River, and so he campaigned against me in 1977 and in 1985, and, no surprise, I lost both elections. That will tell you something about the formidable nature of Leo Bernier.

He was a huge man. He stood, with his boots on, I would say probably about six foot four, and probably weighed in at about 235 pounds. So when he walked into a room, you noticed him. You couldn't help but notice him.

He also had a booming voice. I don't think Mr. Bernier ever would have needed a microphone in this place, and you could hear him from one end of the room to the other.

But on top of that, he was one of the most profound socializers I've ever met in my life. Notice I said "socializer" and not "socialist." He was always the life of the party. It didn't matter where you walked into, if it was an official meeting, a social gathering, a fall fair, a public meeting of some kind; you immediately knew he was there. The warmth, the friendliness, the capacity to reach out to everybody in the room was something that was very, very evident. So it is no surprise that in 1966 he was elected in the by-election to be the member of provincial Parliament for Kenora.

Now, usually it's thought that to be elected the member of provincial Parliament for a riding like that, you have to be from one of the larger urban centres; you have to be from Kenora, from Dryden, from Red Lake. Leo Bernier was from Hudson. I think the population in Hudson at that time, generously, was about 500 people. But it tells you something about his formidable nature that he could come from the small hamlet of Hudson and dominate larger centres—Kenora, which considers itself Winnipeg-by-the-Lake in the summer because the population goes from 15,000 to 65,000—and yet he won over everyone. So he was quite a competent politician.

But he was more than that. He came to Queen's Park with a mission. Because of his life before electoral politics, he felt that our part of Ontario, northwestern Ontario, was being largely ignored. He came here with a mission that he was going to put the northwestern part of the province on the map, and did he ever. There was no

issue that was too small. There was no issue that was too remote. There was no community that was too small to be part of his vision for northern Ontario. He was perhaps fortunate to be a member of this Legislature when development was very much on everyone's mind, because he very much led the development of northwestern Ontario. Highways that didn't exist—the highway from Atikokan to Ignace, the highway from Fort Frances to Dryden, the highway from Ignace to Savant Lake, the highway to Pickle Lake—all of them, in one way or another, I believe, owe their creation and their completion to the drive of Leo Bernier.

He was also unusual, or I guess ahead of his time, in another way, in that he was one of the first members of this Legislature to travel regularly into northern First Nations communities where you have to either go by plane or you go over the ice road. If any of you have watched the History Channel's Ice Road Truckers, you'll understand something about travelling over the ice roads. Mr. Bernier—Leo, as he liked to be called—was doing this literally 35 and 40 years ago, long before it became a fad of television. No community was too small.

After he left the Legislature, he didn't fade from public view. Any time you were in the area of Sioux Lookout or Hudson, you would bump into him at public events: fundraising for the hospital—we just held the grand opening of the new Meno-Ya-Win Health Centre in Sioux Lookout; he was one of the driving forces—and in all kinds of other things that happened in northwestern Ontario where he continued to be a driving force. He's one of those people who have left their stamp not only on this Legislature but the history of Ontario in so many ways.

I want to say to his family members who are here, thank you for sharing him with us. Thank you for allowing him to contribute to all of Ontario, but especially northern and northwestern Ontario, in the way that he did. We will remember Mr. Bernier in so many ways and we will see, as time goes on in this Legislature, the many ways in which he left his stamp on this province. To his family members, I want to say thank you very much. Thank you for allowing Leo Bernier to contribute so much to this province, and especially to northern Ontario.

1530

Hon. Michael Gravelle: It's a tremendous honour for me to represent the government caucus and Premier McGuinty today as we pay tribute to that great northerner, Leo Bernier, who passed away earlier this year at the age of 81.

While I didn't know Leo as well as some members in the House, such as Jim Bradley or Norm Sterling, both of whom sat in the Legislature with him during his years as minister, I can certainly tell you that Leo was a legendary figure to all of us in northern Ontario. Although he retired from the Legislature in 1987, he has certainly left a long, impressive shadow for those of us who have subsequently been elected to represent northern constituencies over the years.

That might be even more true for those of us who have had the privilege of following in his footsteps as northern

development ministers. The fact is that Leo set a very high standard indeed. As the first minister of a separate, stand-alone ministry with the vast reaches of northern Ontario as his domain, Leo was a true force of nature. Known far and wide as the king of the north, Leo made sure that not only was the north not forgotten but that we were the beneficiaries of government programs and funding as we had never seen before.

It was said that Premier Davis never made a decision that would impact the north without Leo's advice, if not his blessing. At a time in our province's history when the economy was booming, Leo made sure that the north received more than its share of the benefits that went along with those years of prosperity. Of course, it did not hurt at all that Leo was a tall, physically imposing man with a gregarious nature, a big smile and a fierce determination to see that the north's voice would be heard.

When Leo left the Legislature in 1987, after more than 20 years of devoted and remarkably successful service, he continued to be an imposing and influential figure. That became particularly clear to me when I joined the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines in 1987 as an employee. Leo's years as minister may have been over, but his presence was still very much felt. I well recall the stories told to me by a number of my ministry colleagues at that time of their years spent working for Leo—they rarely referred to him as "Minister," except when he was there; when he wasn't, they called him Leo. They told me how proud they were to work for him and how intensely loyal they were to him.

That particular reality came home to me very strongly again this past summer when many of those same staffers attended Leo's funeral services in Sioux Lookout. Leo was very clearly a man who left a strong impression on all northerners, but to be with the northern development employees who were determined to pay their last respects to their old boss only reinforced to me the amazing impact he had on his front-line, on-the-ground staff.

It was also at Leo's funeral services that I truly understood that, while he was a commanding presence in politics in northern Ontario, more than anything else he was an extraordinarily well-loved family man: a devoted husband to Marjorie for over 60 years, the father of four children, grandfather of 10 and great-grandfather of eight. Recently widowed, Leo clearly adored his wife, Marj. As Leo's son John said at the time of his passing in a newspaper story I read, "He missed Marj. She was his candle." What was clearly evident at Leo's funeral and the reception that followed was how much his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren truly loved him. What greater legacy can a man leave than a large family that loved him and that will always be proud of him?

But in some way, all of us in northern Ontario were part of Leo's family. He looked after us, he fought for us and set a remarkable example for all of us who followed him. There is probably no really proper way to honour the legacy of a man like Leo Bernier, but he meant so much to us that I believe we must find a way to mark his

passing so that no one will ever forget the extraordinary work he did on behalf of all northerners.

So I'm pleased to tell you that we are in the process of moving forward with plans to rename the stretch of Highway 664 between his birthplace of Sioux Lookout and his beloved community of Hudson the Leo Bernier Highway.

This will be a small gesture, but one that will be forever etched in the hearts and souls of all northerners that this very special man was once and will always remain an incredibly important part of our lives.

On behalf of Premier McGuinty and the entire Liberal caucus, I offer our condolences to the Bernier family and to Leo's close friends who have joined us here today. You honour us with your presence.

Mr. Tim Hudak: It's an honour to bring a few words in tribute to Leo Bernier to his family on behalf of the Ontario PC caucus. Leo Bernier was a giant of a man, both figuratively and literally: 6 feet, 4 inches tall, a booming voice and a larger-than-life presence that befit the vast expanse of his riding and the province he proudly called home. He was the big man from the little town of Hudson. Befitting the big man from Hudson, my colleague from Thunder Bay knows all kinds of stories about the legend of Leo Bernier. Let me share one with you.

There is a story about his first election night back in 1966 in Red Lake, a town about 200 kilometres northeast of Kenora. During the party, Leo found out that beer in Red Lake cost \$1.25 more than it did in Kenora on account of the distance on the Trans-Canada Highway. He later found out that Cochrane had the exact same serious problem. "It irritated me," Leo Bernier later told a reporter. "Just because people lived in Red Lake or Cochrane, they had to pay over \$1 more for beer." As a new member, he took up the issue for his northern constituents and got the liquor board to make the prices more equitable right across northern Ontario.

So began Leo Bernier's trek, standing up for northern Ontario families with a good dose of what makes good politics. That trek lasted 21 years here at Queen's Park, 14 of them in cabinet, serving three different Premiers. He served as Minister of Lands and Forests, later restructured as the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Then came that very proud moment in Leo's career when, in 1977, former Premier Bill Davis appointed Leo Bernier the first ever Minister of Northern Affairs. In short, it was a ministry made for Leo Bernier. It was the perfect fit and gave the province a powerful northern voice. Leo went to work right away and brought considerable energy to bear and the full force of his personality. A year later, he signed a deal with the federal government for improved access to northern forest resources to help create jobs.

Fittingly, Leo gave a statement on northern affairs in 1979. Very suitable for the king of the north, it was almost his own northern speech from the throne. It included new highways for the north, a geological survey as the basis for planning and development that led to the

creation of new mines, an agricultural study on northern crop potential, and proposals for a local services board to arrange for services including fire protection and garbage collection in unincorporated areas.

Later, Leo awarded contracts for air ambulance services in Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Timmins and Sioux Lookout. He signed NORDA with the federal government, providing incentives for small-scale projects in agriculture, tourism, natural resources, business and industry. Then he gave Ontario its mineral emblem, the amethyst. Then, maybe, Leo actually took a day off.

After he left public life in 1987, he continued to serve the north as chairman of FedNor, the federal economic development initiative for northern Ontario. He later became a member of the Ontario Tourism Council, advocating for the economic benefits of tourism.

Even though he was no longer in public life, he was still very much a part of the PC team. I became Minister of Northern Development and Mines almost 15 years after Leo Bernier had the same post. Yet there was scarcely a corner of the province, or the ministry, where I wasn't left with the king of the north's indelible impression. He was a great source of advice and counsel for me personally on northern issues, on tourism, on how to be a minister and on how to be a leader.

He said his top advice to elected members was that we should travel right across the province and meet the actual people paying the bills, talk to them, get to know their issues and fight for what they think is important. I saw the results of Leo's work in person many times.

1540

I'll tell you one quick story. About 10 years ago, John Baird and I were on hand for the dedication of Bernier Drive on the lakeshore in Kenora. It was moving to see the respect Leo commanded and how he was still able, despite being out of office for a number of years, to greet people by their first names, to ask about their kids and the grandkids and to pass on regards to somebody's mom or dad. Many of the responses he got back were asking him to get back into politics, to go at Howard Hampton one last time. Nearly 15 years had passed, but his impression on the north remains strong.

Leo left us this summer to join Marjorie, his wife of 60 years, who passed away the previous January. I want to take a moment to say to all the family gathered here today, Leo's children, grandchildren, close friends and the political staff who were at his side for so many years, thank you for sharing Leo with us. You should be justifiably proud of his enormous legacy.

There was a news story back in 1982, when Leo told the reporter that instead of being stuck in Queen's Park hanging out in the minister's office, he would rather be flying his plane above northern Ontario and seeing what was really going on. Well, friends, there's no doubt in my mind that Leo, now with Marjorie, is watching over that very beautiful and special part of the province as we speak.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to thank the honourable members for their tributes and very much

thank the family, the friends and the former staffers who have joined us here at the Ontario Legislature today. On behalf of all members of the Legislature, we certainly offer our condolences to the family. As well, I assure you that we will provide you with copies of Hansard and a DVD of today's proceedings so that you will have a permanent record of the tribute to the king of the north.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH MOIS DE LA SENSIBILISATION À L'ADOPTION

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: It is a pleasure to rise today to recognize November as Adoption Awareness Month. This month, we thank the thousands of families across Ontario who have opened their hearts and homes to children who need a family.

J'ai le plaisir aujourd'hui, devant cette Assemblée, de reconnaître en ce mois de novembre le Mois de la sensibilisation à l'adoption. Ce mois, nous remercions les milliers de familles, aux quatre coins de l'Ontario, qui ont ouvert leur cœur et leur foyer aux enfants qui avaient besoin d'une famille.

These moms and dads, grandmothers and grandfathers, brothers and sisters are providing what many of us so often take for granted: a loving family that is there for us through life's many challenges and blessings.

This month, and year-round, we also thank all those who work every day to help find permanent, loving homes for children and youth in the care of children's aid societies. Because of these dedicated professionals, children and youth are finding safe, secure places they can call home every day.

This month we raise awareness about the many positive benefits adoption can bring to individuals and families who may never have considered it before. Adoption can be an incredibly rewarding experience for both the child being adopted and the family opening their hearts and homes.

As we speak, many of the children in the care of children's aid societies are eligible for adoption. Some are toddlers; some are older. Some are siblings; some are only children. Some have no identified special needs and some need special supports. Every child is unique. What they all have in common is that they will thrive with the right family in the right environment.

En tant que ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse, j'ai eu le privilège d'avoir écouté un grand nombre d'enfants et de jeunes dont nous avons la charge et qui formulaient leur rêve de trouver une famille.

I have been privileged in my role as Minister of Children and Youth Services to have listened to many of our children and youth in care as they talked about their dreams of finding a family.

Today, there are many options for kids to find permanent, safe, loving homes that will lead to better outcomes. Adoption is perhaps the most well known; legal custody is another option. It allows a child to be raised in a new permanent family while maintaining a connection with their birth families. Another possibility is for a child to live with family members.

The key, however, is permanence. That's why our government has focused on permanent, loving homes for children since 2006. We believed and still do that this is the very best option for them to reach their full potential.

In 2009-10, about 1,000 children and youth were placed for adoption, an increase of 21% over 2008-09. While the number is promising, there is still more work to do. In the aboriginal community especially we have to do more to keep aboriginal families together or place children in traditional customary care in their community so they can remain connected to their culture and traditions.

Work is being done across the province and innovation is happening. Just recently, I visited the Kawartha-Haliburton CAS, where I met a woman who knew all about the range of options available because she had 12 children: four birth children, four foster children, two adopted children and two she had legal custody over. I also recently met many prospective parents and adoption workers from across Ontario at the Ontario Adoption Resource Exchange Conference. They all had one goal: to try to find permanent homes for children in care.

Many CASs across Ontario are making changes—from special committees to promoting adoption to foster parents—to see that more children and youth find permanent homes. Par suite de ces changements et grâce aux efforts déployés par les sociétés d'aide à l'enfance, nous réalisons des progrès. Because of these changes and the hard work of children's aid societies, we are making progress. Fewer kids are coming into care and more are finding permanent homes. But there is more to do.

We all want better outcomes for children in our care and more kids in safe, loving, permanent homes. Let that goal guide us this month and throughout the year ahead as we work to open a world of possibility to more and more children.

BULLYING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK

SEMAINE DE LA SENSIBILISATION À L'INTIMIDATION ET DE LA PRÉVENTION

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I rise in the House today to mark Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week. There are approximately two million students in our publicly funded education system, and each of them deserves the opportunity to learn in a safe and inclusive environment.

L'intimidation prend des formes diverses dont beaucoup sont dévastatrices. Bullying can be physical, verbal or social in nature. It can also be Internet-based. Cyber-bullying is when students are subjected to taunts

and hurtful comments wherever there is a computer in the room—including their own at home.

To say that bullying can be eliminated as a result of stricter punishment is simply unrealistic. The importance of bullying awareness and prevention requires more from us than empty promises. It is an opportunity to speak up and speak out, to talk to students, teachers, parents and, in fact, the community, and to make a change by taking action. This week is a time for all of us to turn up the volume and make it clear that bullying is not acceptable in any form.

C'est pourquoi notre gouvernement est fier d'avoir pris des mesures décisives et concrètes afin de soutenir la prévention de l'intimidation et de favoriser la sécurité dans les écoles de l'Ontario. Since 2004, we have supported safe schools initiatives that create safe and inclusive school environments. We asked the safe schools action team to look into bullying and harassment and respond with recommendations—and we have responded to those recommendations. We made it mandatory for principals to consider suspension for acts of bullying. We partnered with the Kids Help Phone to support over 50,000 students who have been bullied. We passed the Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act, which is the first legislation of its kind in Canada. It requires all board employees to report incidents of bullying to the principals. It also requires principals to contact the parents of victims.

1550

Just yesterday, with our partners in community safety and correctional services, we announced the new safe schools grant, which will help police and local schools work together to reduce violence and bullying.

Earlier today we announced the Premier's Safe Schools Awards, which will recognize exceptional work in fostering a safe and inclusive school environment. Notre stratégie pour la sécurité dans les écoles est une approche qui traite des raisons complexes de l'intimidation et prévoit des conséquences sévères pour les élèves qui commettent des actes d'intimidation. That is why, while suspension must always be considered for those who bully, we also offer supports for students, including learning opportunities for reinforcing positive behaviour while helping students make the right choices.

We truly are proud of our students and what we have done to make Ontario schools safer, but we recognize there is more to do. There will always be more to do to ensure students have a safe and supportive learning environment that helps them realize their full potential. Effective bullying prevention requires a comprehensive, community-based approach that is sustainable throughout the year. So I challenge schools to take this opportunity during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week to launch programs and initiatives that support a safe and welcoming school environment year-round.

While we still have more work to do to combat bullying in our school system, let's keep in mind the significant progress that has been made to date. I do want to thank everyone in the education community for their

hard work and dedication to making Ontario schools safer.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Statements by ministries? Responses?

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus to recognize November as Adoption Awareness Month. I'd like to acknowledge the commitment that families make when adopting a child. Adoption is an integral part of ensuring a secure and stable life for a child. The impact that finding a forever family has on a child is life-changing.

I'd like to share one story, of Will and Kate from my riding of Dufferin–Caledon, who knew that becoming adoptive parents was the route they wanted to take to make their family complete. They found adopting to be an extremely rewarding decision. Now they have two wonderful children, Chas and Tristan, and have found their forever family. To quote their son Chas, "Without a family, you don't feel loved, and when you don't feel loved you don't have opportunities."

However, adopting a child does not come without its challenges. Families need to bond together, and it can be tough, as many children come from the foster care system, bounced around from home to home. Will and Kate shared their story as part of this month's awareness campaign to dispel some of the stereotypes around adoption. Kate said that many people had the idea that children who have been in care have been irreparably harmed and are damaged goods. But they're just kids who have had some bad luck, and with a loving family they can thrive and flourish.

While there have been many successful child-and-family pairings here in Ontario, there are still many more children looking for a family of their own. I want to recognize the Ottawa children's aid society, who last year launched Canada's first Heart Gallery pilot project, an initiative aimed at finding families for children with special needs, sibling groups, and older youth. Of the 18 children who have participated so far, 16 have been matched or placed with adoptive families. Adoptive families, social workers and children's aid societies should be commended for raising awareness on this issue and for wanting to provide children with a better quality of life.

BULLYING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to speak today on behalf of the official opposition and respond to the minister's statement concerning Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week.

I would like to begin by commending the member for Kitchener–Waterloo for her steadfast commitment to protecting children from bullying and harassment. This

whole thing was Elizabeth Witmer's idea. She deserves the credit. Everyone in this House should know that it was because of her hard work and dedication that Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week became officially recognized in Ontario. I congratulate her for committing herself to ensuring that we provide safe school environments for our children. They deserve nothing less.

I know that the member for Kitchener–Waterloo has worked very closely and very diligently with numerous anti-bullying organizations and concerned parents. The member has mentioned many times that, in her capacity as critic for education, she felt it was imperative that something be done to raise awareness and to call attention to this serious and increasingly prevalent issue. She was approached in the autumn of 2009 by desperate parents and teachers who were extremely concerned about the many ways bullying was affecting their children and students. They witnessed the immense impact that repeated and often relentless bullying was having on their children, families, classrooms and school communities.

The member for Kitchener–Waterloo listened to these parents, teachers and students. She heard their concerns and frustrations, and she decided that something had to be done. For her, platitudes were simply not good enough. Fortunately, this House passed her resolution unanimously.

This initiative has provided Ontario families and educators with a simple but enormously effective means to prevent and deter bullying. In its most basic form, this week is about educating parents, students, teachers and administrators about bullying, its root causes, its consequences and how to prevent and deter it.

Unfortunately, this government continues with its inadequate response to school safety. Despite the claims of the minister and the Premier, it's clear the government has not given bullying the necessary consideration and attention that it deserves. The government refuses to acknowledge that bullying requires much more than Band-Aid solutions.

Our safe schools stakeholders continually express their dissatisfaction with the weakness of this government's safe schools legislation. They recognize that we need to do more. I know that Elizabeth Witmer is determined to ensure that Ontario's students and families are protected from bullying.

In closing, we would like to commend the many dedicated parents, teachers and students who are working every day to eliminate bullying.

BULLYING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION WEEK

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm happy, as the education critic for the NDP, to make some comments on Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week. I want to acknowledge straight off the work that teachers are doing, that some parents are doing, that some students are doing and even the efforts of the minister from time to time, on the whole

issue of anti-bullying initiatives. I have to say, the initiatives are few and far between. Some are helpful, such as the mandatory reporting of bullying incidents. That's all that the bill she has introduced does, but it's better than a kick in the teeth, I would say. So that is a good thing.

But I've got to tell you, we have to do a little more, Minister. The whole idea of giving a Premier's award for anti-bullying practices—please. What teachers need is real help in the classroom. There are experts who deal with anti-bullying initiatives. They know what needs to be done, but teachers alone can't do it. And we know boards don't know what to do because they don't have the money to bring in the experts.

Rather than an award about what teachers are doing on their own or what boards might be doing on their own with whatever scraps of dollars they can find, the province needs to be a leader. Rather than saying, "I challenge schools to take the opportunity during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week to launch programs and initiatives," I say to the minister, give them the help that they desperately need to be able to do that job. Don't challenge them on their own, and don't challenge boards to do something that they would love to do but do not have the money to bring in the experts to provide the advice about what initiatives could be brought into the school so they could do this job well. That's what they need. I acknowledge all the work that individuals are doing. I even acknowledge some of the little efforts the minister is making. Surely we can do more.

I've called for Ombudsman oversight over these matters. I think there's a whole lot of bullying going on and a whole lot of sexual violence from students to other students that's going on. I believe that needs to be exposed in a way that only the Ombudsman could give us a picture of, in terms of what is going on and what help we could give to some of those victims who have been abused, because the system—in the cases that I've heard—has failed them badly. Ombudsman oversight wouldn't be so bad.

Some leadership from the minister about some monies that could be given so teachers could do a better job would be useful. Their lives would be improved, and the learning environment would be improved in the process.

1600

ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Michael Prue: I wish to preface my remarks on adoption by saying that I was, for many years, a member of the children's aid society of Toronto, and I saw firsthand how children pined for and how they needed adoption and stability in their homes.

I listened to what the minister had to say, but I am reminded of what happened on November 3. A delegation came to this very Legislature, imploring the government to implement an action plan on adoption because that delegation did not feel that we were doing enough. They were led by Pat Convery, executive director of the

Adoption Council of Ontario; Aleisha Deece-Cassidy, a 14-year-old former crown ward of Ontario; and William Falk, a member of the government of Ontario expert panel on infertility and adoption. The title of their press release, I think, said it all: "Ontario's 9,300 Crown Ward Children Left by McGuinty Government to Grow Up in Foster Care."

They talked at great length about the thousands of kids who've been permanently removed from their parents' homes, usually because of neglect and abuse, and are now wards of the province. They said that many of them could and should be adopted, but the public adoption system in Ontario is broken. They went on to state that the government hasn't implemented a single recommendation from the August 2009 report of the government-appointed expert panel on infertility and adoption, chaired by David Johnston, that eminent Canadian who is now Canada's Governor General.

The recommendations, for the record, included creating a provincial adoption agency, developing tools to manage the adoption system, providing adequate funding that supports the realities of adoption, supporting assisted reproduction rights, and raising awareness about family-building options in Ontario.

If the government was truly serious, they'd be acting on that.

PETITIONS

WIND TURBINES

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Walmart wants to install an 80-foot, 20-kilowatt wind turbine in a low-wind urban area of Burlington, Ontario, very close to residences; and

"Whereas the Green Energy Act allows this type of project to bypass municipal approvals and meaningful public input;

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

"That the Minister of the Environment refuse a permit for Walmart's turbine and revise the Green Energy Act to allow public input and municipal approvals on all renewable energy projects."

Interjections.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I agree with this petition, regardless of the heckling from the other side. I will sign this petition and give it to page Donna.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Michael Prue: I have one of the shortest petitions I've ever seen. It reads:

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

“Be it resolved that Dalton McGuinty immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax (HST).”

It’s signed by hundreds of people. I’m in agreement and will send this down with page Jake.

WEARING OF HELMETS

Mrs. M. Aileen Carroll: This is a petition of over 1,300 people collected by a young skier who was in an accident.

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

“That we make it a mandatory rule on all ski hills in Ontario that participants in any downhill activity must wear a helmet and have it done up properly.”

I’ll affix my signature to that.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition in support of Bill 100. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas pedestrians and cyclists are increasingly using secondary highways to support healthy lifestyles and expand active transportation; and

“Whereas paved shoulders on highways enhance public safety for all highway users, expand tourism opportunities and support good health; and

“Whereas paved shoulders help to reduce the maintenance cost of repairs to highway surfaces; and

“Whereas Norm Miller’s private member’s Bill 100 provides for a minimum one-metre paved shoulder for the benefit of pedestrians, cyclists and motorists;

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

“That Norm Miller’s private member’s Bill 100, which requires a minimum one-metre paved shoulder on designated highways, receive swift passage through the legislative process.”

It’s signed by a number of my constituents, and I support it too.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt.

“Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lockout; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

“Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric

of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk with page Sarah.

ONTARIO SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Mr. Toby Barrett: “Haldimand-Norfolk Needs an OSPCA Chapter:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the establishment of a local Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (OSPCA) could help deal with the brutality and neglect of horses and other large animals; and

“Whereas the Ontario government could provide training for the Ontario Provincial Police to deal with animal abuse issues;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the Ontario government request the establishment of an OSPCA chapter in Haldimand-Norfolk to provide the two counties with support in cases of animal abuse and neglect.”

I agree with the petition and affix my signature to it.

CHRONIC CEREBROSPINAL VENOUS INSUFFICIENCY

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was given to me by Mrs. Rona Ramsey from the Sudbury MS Society, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas, even though health care institutions in Ontario have the equipment and expertise, those MS patients who have been diagnosed with blocked veins in their neck (CCSVI) cannot receive the necessary treatment in Ontario; and

“Whereas many of the MS patients with CCSVI, at great personal expense, have had to seek treatment in other countries such as India, Poland, Bulgaria, Italy and the US, the provincial government still has not authorized the procedure, which is angioplasty, an already approved procedure since the early 1980s; and

“Whereas not all people diagnosed with MS will have CCSVI, and not all people who have CCSVI will have been diagnosed with MS, CCSVI treatment should be authorized and treated on its own merits, regardless of any MS issues; and

“Whereas, despite numerous testimonials of exceptional post-treatment improvements in the quality of life for patients, accompanied by detailed presentations by vascular surgeons to the Ontario government, the Ontario government still has not yet approved CCSVI treatment;

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

“That the government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Health, must immediately approve and fund all diagnosing and treatment of CCSVI by qualified Ontario health institutions.”

I agree with this petition, affix my name to it, and ask page Donna to bring it to the clerks' table.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis;

“Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a well-known and universally practised procedure that is low-risk and at relatively low expense;

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

“That the Minister of Health agrees to proceed with clinical trials of the venoplasty treatment, to fully explore its potential to bring relief to the thousands of Ontarians afflicted with multiple sclerosis.”

I agree with the petition, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Drew.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury.

“Whereas the Ontario government is making ... PET scanning, a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients” under certain conditions; and

“Whereas,” since October 2009, “insured PET scans” are performed “in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

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“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;”

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through the Sudbury Regional Hospital, thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Sarah to bring it to the clerks.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis;

“Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a

well-known and universally practised procedure that is low-risk and at relatively low expense;

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

“That the Minister of Health agrees to proceed with clinical trials of the venoplasty treatment to fully explore its potential to bring relief to the thousands of Ontarians afflicted with multiple sclerosis.”

I agree with this petition. I will affix my name to it and give to it page Tony.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mrs. Julia Munro: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas almost 12,000 Ontario citizens who have an intellectual disability are on waiting lists for residential supports;

“Whereas another 7,000 individuals are waiting for other supports;

“Whereas 80% of the 1,500 parents providing primary care for their adult children waiting for residential services are over the age of 70;

“Whereas the government of Ontario made a commitment in 2007 to provide a 2% base funding increase to agencies providing developmental services every year up to 2010-11;

“Whereas the government has decided not to provide the 2% funding increase promised for the current year;

“Whereas the failure to honour this funding commitment will cause further deterioration of supports and services for people who have an intellectual disability;

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

“That the government of Ontario reinstate the 2% base funding increase promised four years ago to service providers in the developmental services sector.”

As I agree with this, I've affixed my signature and given it to page Drew.

HIGHWAY 15

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the point that Highway 15 intersects with County Road 42 has been considered by many to be a hazardous intersection, particularly when local residents travel over the provincial highway; and

“Whereas in 2007 the Ministry of Transportation staff presented design plans which showed a dramatic reduction in the curvature of this portion of Highway 15, which would have considerably improved the level of visibility and safety to our residents crossing over Highway 15; and

“Whereas in late 2008/early 2009, the Ministry of Transportation revised the 2007 design plans for this intersection, which would only minimally improve the visibility and safety of this intersection but would result

in a significant reduction in the amount of funds expended by the province of Ontario;

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

“That the Minister of Transportation be respectfully requested to direct staff to recommend the 2007 design plan for the intersection of Highway 15 and County Road 42.”

I certainly agree with this petition. It’s been certified by the table. I’ll affix my signature and send it with page Sarah.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

Mr. Steve Clark: I again want to thank Amy Preston from Brockville, who has been a great advocate for CCSVI research. I have a petition that she’s provided me to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It’s been certified by the table. It reads as follows:

“Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis;

“Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a well-known and universally practised procedure that is low-risk and at relatively low expense;

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

“That the Minister of Health agrees to proceed with clinical trials of the venoplasty treatment to fully explore its potential to bring relief to the thousands of Ontarians afflicted with multiple sclerosis.”

I certainly agree with this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Sarah.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WATER OPPORTUNITIES AND WATER CONSERVATION ACT, 2010

LOI DE 2010 SUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DES TECHNOLOGIES DE L’EAU ET LA CONSERVATION DE L’EAU

Mr. Wilkinson moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 72, An Act to enact the Water Opportunities Act, 2010 and to amend other Acts in respect of water conservation and other matters / Projet de loi 72, Loi édictant la Loi de 2010 sur le développement des technologies de l’eau et modifiant d’autres lois en ce qui concerne la conservation de l’eau et d’autres questions.

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

Hon. John Wilkinson: I’m honoured to rise today to begin third reading debate on the McGuinty government’s proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act. Today I’ll be sharing my time with my

parliamentary assistant, Dr. Helena Jaczek, the MPP for Oak Ridges–Markham, who has carried this bill through first and second reading and through clause-by-clause consideration. I want to personally thank her for her hard work, and I want to publicly acknowledge my predecessor Minister Gerretsen for introducing Bill 72. It is an honour to carry on the work that he started.

This act is about valuing our water. This is about recognizing what it means to our future, to our children and our grandchildren. It’s about recognizing what we have, this tremendous resource, the envy of the world. This is about how changing our view of water and how we use it will lead to a better future. We need to value our water by recognizing how vital it is to our health and our communities; by recognizing the immense opportunities it holds for us; by not wasting it. We have a responsibility to the families of Ontario, to our children and our grandchildren, to protect and safeguard this invaluable legacy and the opportunities that can lift them up and carry them forward. We must not waste this opportunity or squander our natural capital. That’s what this government understands, and that is exactly what we’ve been doing in regard to water opportunities these past seven years. This is by no means a new direction for our government. For the past seven years, our government has made protecting our water a key priority. We passed the Clean Water Act, the Safeguarding and Sustaining Ontario’s Water Act and the Lake Simcoe Protection Act. It’s time, in our opinion, to take the next logical step by passing the proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act so we can protect what we have and seize this opportunity to become a North American leader in water conservation and management.

We have already banned the bulk export of water, but we will and we must export our expertise to a thirsty world. This is not about privatizing our water systems. We remain committed to public ownership. The purpose of this act has nothing to do with the privatization of publicly owned water systems. Instead, it would help us safeguard our water while promoting our water treatment and conservation technology to the world.

As I said, we live in a thirsty world. Demand for water is only going to grow, and in the next 20 years, experts predict a 40% gap between global supply and demand. We need to protect our water, conserve what we have and transfer the skills and practices we’ve developed to ensure others can do the same around the world. That is in our own best interests.

A number of Ontario municipalities have also identified water and waste water systems as significant energy consumers, reportedly accounting for between 25% to 60% of their electricity bills. That cost is passed on through property taxes. So if passed, this act would help municipalities by encouraging water conservation planning as part of municipal water sustainability plans.

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Already, many Ontario municipalities are showing leadership in water conservation. Through their newly developed water efficiency plan, the city of Toronto is

striving to ensure that their water system can meet the needs of a growing city. The plan, to be implemented over the next 10 years, would reduce current water use, but accommodate population and employment growth at one third the cost of expanding infrastructure. Another example is the city of Guelph, which has implemented a water conservation and efficiency program, including incentives such as toilet rebate programs, rain barrel programs and public education. Their investment in water conservation since 2006 has resulted in water savings worth up to \$7.3 million in the avoided cost of a new water supply.

We heard the good advice of Ecojustice Canada and the Canadian Environmental Law Association. This bill will encourage municipalities and public agencies to consider water reuse, stormwater harvesting and the promotion of green leafy infrastructure in a whole new way. We also listened to our municipal stakeholders, like the cities of London, Hamilton and Toronto, about the need to provide greater flexibility in the phasing in of municipal water sustainability plans. We've received support from AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, for our proposal to better integrate municipal water, waste water and stormwater planning in Bill 72. I believe we have reached the right balance, and I know AMO looks forward to working with us as the regulations are developed.

We are also doing this for Ontario's businesses. Our work on water supports the green economy and a high quality of life. The proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act would create more jobs in the growing global market for clean water technology and would support business development in our province. Already, Ontario is home to many water technology leaders. Ontario companies currently employ some 22,000 people in good, high-paying jobs in areas such as water conservation and nanotechnology, and these companies are doing great things. For example, in Whitby, Real Tech Inc. is producing technologies used to monitor water quality in real time. Their innovation led to an award from the American Water Works Association. In Hamilton, a company called Hydromantis is producing software systems used to optimize facility designs, train operators and evaluate potential emissions during waste water collection and treatment. Echologics found a leak in an Ottawa water pipe that had been losing around 900 litres per minute for at least five years, at a cost of some \$100,000 a year.

It's these companies that are already making a difference in treating and protecting our water resources. Imagine the possibilities if we bring Ontario water tech and water services companies together to help them reach the global marketplace.

If passed, this act would enable the creation of the Water Technology Acceleration Project, or WaterTAP. My ministry is eager to work closely with our sister Ministry of Research and Innovation. This technology hub would bring industry, academia and government together to encourage the development and commercialization of new water technology.

Through consultation and in committee, we heard from the Ontario Environment Industry Association and Conservation Ontario. Both of these organizations highlighted that not just technologies, but also services, in the water sector were critical to providing leading-edge, innovative water solutions. We listened to these important partners and clarified that the scope of WaterTAP will be broad enough to assist and support the capacity of Ontario's water, waste water and stormwater sectors, including the very important service dimension.

We also see many opportunities to work together with our aboriginal communities, who have articulated their powerful relationship to water. WaterTAP is aimed at assisting in the development of Ontario's water and waste water sectors, including water professionals who work in and serve aboriginal communities.

We also want to help Ontarians understand and value this incredible resource. We know we can make great strides in reducing residential water usage. All Ontarians have a role to play in understanding how to use our water more wisely. Here in the 21st century, we need to recognize that we can no longer afford to waste anything. Conservation must become the new norm. By saving water, we save energy and protect our resources for our children and our grandchildren. By encouraging water efficiency and conservation by our municipalities and by people in their own homes and in their businesses, we will help support the growth of the clean water sector and create good jobs for Ontarians in the new green economy.

There is a need to act. I believe this is the time to act, to value our water, to seize this opportunity. That is why we need to pass Bill 72, and I ask all members from all sides of the House to support the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I yield my time to my parliamentary assistant.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Oak Ridges–Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Today, I'm proud to join Minister Wilkinson for third reading debate and to speak in support of our government's proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act.

Bill 72 is yet another step in a series of positive actions our government has taken to safeguard our water resources. From our Clean Water Act to our amendments to the Ontario Water Resources Act to our Lake Simcoe Protection Act, we have made healthy, sustainable water a key priority.

We also made commitments under the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence River Basin Sustainable Water Resources Agreement in 2005. Under this agreement, Ontario, Quebec, and the eight US Great Lakes states committed to develop and implement water conservation and efficiency programs to ensure long-term sustainable water use and protect the Great Lakes.

The proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act would help fulfill Ontario's commitment under this agreement by enabling the following activities:

setting aspirational conservation targets to encourage Ontarians to use water more wisely; furthering government leadership in water conservation; and requiring water sustainability planning and encouraging conservation by municipalities.

As has already been stated by Premier McGuinty and Minister Wilkinson, this is not about selling water. We have banned bulk water exports out of Ontario's three water basins. What the proposed act would do, if passed, is to deliver three key outcomes. It would help make Ontario a North American leader in the development and sale of technologies for water conservation and water treatment. It would encourage sustainable infrastructure and conservation planning, including using innovative technologies to solve water, waste water and stormwater infrastructure challenges. And it would encourage Ontarians to use water more efficiently. I'd like to speak to this third point in some greater detail.

We know that Ontarians use, on average, 267 litres of water a day, far more than comparable countries like Germany or the UK, where people use, on average, 150 litres per day. We also believe we use far less than we actually do. Half of Canadians think fresh water is our country's most important natural resource, according to the recent Unilever/RBC water survey of 2010, and yet we are among the highest water users in the world.

We need to take steps to conserve our water to ensure we have enough now and well into the future, especially as pressures from climate change, population growth and urbanization keep increasing. Using water efficiently is one of the most cost-effective ways to address water and waste water needs.

Our proposed act, if passed, would help encourage efforts that significantly reduce residential water use. It would give the government the authority to request standardized information on water bills to help people understand how much water they use and allow them to track their progress as they reduce their use.

We are also proposing, for example, water efficiency standards for more consumer products, such as shower heads, to help people use less water and save money.

The residential sector accounts for 40% of all energy used in Ontario, and heating water is typically the second-largest consumer of energy in buildings. Improved water efficiency will save water and energy well into the future.

A number of Ontario municipalities have identified water and waste water facilities as significant energy consumers, reportedly accounting for between 25% and 60% of their respective municipal electricity bills.

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So, one of the key goals of our proposed act would be to encourage the use of innovative water technologies and services to reduce the use of water. Something many people don't realize is that much of the cost of providing clean water and treating waste water is the cost of energy associated with these activities. The new technology is often much more efficient, using much less water and energy to run the same systems, potentially providing

cost savings to municipalities, and ultimately to consumers.

Already, many Ontario municipalities are showing leadership in water conservation. They've seen how investing in water conservation and innovative technologies can avoid significant expenditures on infrastructure. My riding of Oak Ridges–Markham is situated in York region, which has been doing a great deal of work in this area. In their Water for Tomorrow program, they found that water efficiency measures represent the cheapest source of water supply for the region, at about 16% of the average cost region-wide, to expand water and waste water infrastructure. The proposed act would support municipalities by encouraging them to identify new opportunities for innovative and cost-effective Ontario technologies that would help solve water, waste water and stormwater infrastructure challenges. Every drop of water we save is water we don't need to pump or treat.

Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple, once stated, "Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower," and this is definitely true for Ontario today. We're leading the way in environmental action and protection. The Green Energy Act is attracting new investment in the renewable energy sector, creating well-paying jobs, helping us clean our air and reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions from dirty coal. It is making Ontario a green energy leader in North America and is a critical part of our Open Ontario plan. This plan will strengthen our economy, support new businesses and create more jobs for our families. It will make Ontario open for opportunities in our ever-evolving world.

Our proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act is also a key pillar of our Open Ontario plan, and would lead to investment, new products and innovation. It would bring together the best minds from the water industry and the research community. It would connect our cutting-edge companies with the institutions best equipped to find solutions to enhance competitiveness, and would help us to better align research and development funding with industry needs. Already, the water innovations coming out of Ontario are helping Ontarians—from businesses to municipalities to aboriginal communities—manage their water resources. The proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act would also help us showcase our ingenuity to the world, and would propel our innovative water technologies to the global marketplace. We want to be prepared to capitalize on the \$400-billion global clean water industry that currently exists, a sector that is doubling every five to six years. Passing this bill would leave us in a state of readiness.

While North America's water needs are expected to increase over the next five years, we know that higher growth opportunities exist in the East Asia and Pacific regions, with China and India targeted as specific emerging markets. Economies that develop the technological solutions to conserve more water or purify water more efficiently will have a tremendous com-

petitive advantage in the coming years. That's an edge we've been honing in Ontario. We are leading through our actions, our ability to look to the future and our willingness to share our expertise with others.

It makes sense for Ontario to lead in this area. We have a well-educated workforce, we are known for excellence in research and private sector technology, and we benefit from our province's geographic advantage. Many of Ontario's businesses are already contributing world-class water technology to other jurisdictions. We are working on issues surrounding water sustainability, focusing on climate change, watershed planning, and management and infrastructure maintenance and replacement.

The creation of WaterTAP, the Water Technologies Acceleration Project, through the proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act, would enable our leaders to come together to promote water technologies and services for use at home and abroad. The world needs Ontario's leadership, and we can teach the world how to make water safer. This is one of the most pressing needs in the developing world, and Ontario can help provide solutions that would save lives and provide better access to clean water for people in regions that suffer from water scarcity.

The proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act would also attract economic development and create good jobs, the kinds of jobs we want for our children and grandchildren. It would encourage investment and opportunity for the start-up of new companies in Ontario and would help lead to the expansion of our provincial water expertise. New jobs would be created in the growing global market for clean water technology, working through our partners: industry, universities, colleges and entrepreneurs.

We understand that we cannot have a strong 21st century economy without having a sustainable economy. That's why the pillars under this bill would work to strengthen the economy and protect our environment at the same time. Innovation, the sharing of environmental experience, and leadership are all traits Ontario can share with the world. As stewards of one of the world's largest sources of fresh water, we also have an opportunity to demonstrate our innovation and leadership when it comes to protecting and conserving our water supply. If we come together, Ontario can be at the forefront when it comes to water protection.

Around the globe, one in eight people lacks access to clean water. Close to half of the world's population, around 46%, do not have running water in their homes. In the next 15 years, 1.8 billion people will live in regions where water scarcity is a reality.

This is a worldwide health and environmental concern. Ontario's expertise can help. Our proposed Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act would open Ontario to new ideas, growth, and innovation. It would open up new opportunities for good jobs for our people. It would strengthen our communities by helping us conserve water and energy. We can build a strong,

successful water technology sector here that would be able to provide solutions to some of the world's greatest challenges.

For all these reasons I have stated, I strongly support our proposed act, and I urge all my colleagues to join me.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the speeches from the two members of the Ontario government. They mentioned some of the legislation that they have passed over the last seven years—the Lake Simcoe act, some of the water-related legislation. It's interesting: They did not mention the Adams Mine Lake Act. I don't know why that legislation would not be included amongst the other water-related bills. Maybe we'll find out during the course of debate.

I can appreciate the government members crowing a bit about legislation that they have passed over the past seven years. Actually, there was a number of bills that were not mentioned: the pesticides legislation, the toxics reduction legislation. I'm not sure if the spills bill was mentioned. Maybe it was.

Interjection.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Was the spills bill mentioned? Maybe no one can remember.

But anyway, you know, it kind of impresses on me the fact that when you have a string of probably eight pieces of environmental legislation—this is probably number eight, as I recall; I count the so-called Adams Mine Lake Act as number one—there's a cumulative effect. As we know, with every piece of legislation that is passed come the regulations, and with the regulations come a myriad of bureaucratic forms, red tape, rules, regulations, and when you start adding it up—and I know much of this debate focuses on one bill at a time—it can become onerous, it can suffocate, and in many ways can be counterproductive.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I appreciate the comments of the parliamentary assistant about this water bill, and I caught some of what the minister himself had to say at the beginning of his presentation.

There's no doubt that investment in water conservation technology makes a lot of sense. Frankly, if we in Ontario had an energy conservation plan for electricity and for gas, if we had a commitment to invest in conservation in those areas, we could, in fact, take great strides. But the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, who is often quoted in question period by the government, actually says that you do not have a plan.

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Mr. Khalil Ramal: We do.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: You do not have a plan. Read the Environmental Commissioner's report. Take a look at the simple reality. You do not have one. You don't have a climate change plan that will make the targets that you have already set—your own plan. When you do your own analysis and your own report says that you'll only

meet 70% of your target, and a big chunk of that is dependent on cap and trade coming out of the federal government, and that, in turn, coming out of the United States—not to be seen.

I think that a good water conservation bill would make a lot of sense. I think a commitment by a government that mirrored even the California commitment of a 20% reduction in water consumption would be very good. But I'm quite worried that having gone through this particular show, this particular performance, in the past, we will hear all the right words about the technological direction that we have to take. What we won't see, ultimately, even with a bill passed and regulations put in place, will be the technologies, the plans and the targets that are needed to change our economy and to provide water and waste water services at an affordable cost. That's the concern.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It gives me great pleasure to add my comments to the minister's and the parliamentary assistant's on this very, very important piece of legislation.

Some of the members from the opposition have mentioned, how can you argue against legislation to protect our water? Rightfully so. We're very, very fortunate in this province to hold one of the largest fresh bodies of water anywhere in the world, and we need to do everything we can—

Mr. Khalil Ramal: To protect it.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: —to protect it.

We took a number of initiatives. This is another piece of legislation to move forward that not only is here to try to protect our water resources, but also the expertise that we have in the way of maintaining and protecting clean water. Those technologies, I think, are a huge asset that we can use, frankly, as an export—the technology, not the water—to help other parts of the world that don't have the types of resources that we have. We've all seen some of those news reports from those less fortunate areas of the world where water is a huge commodity. Frankly, I'm not sure how those people survive.

As we debate this bill, we have support from a number of municipalities, from AMO and from industry, because this is really a fairly comprehensive piece of legislation when it comes to that particular resource.

We did things in the past to stop the sale of bulk water, to try to protect it. We banned expanding the use of pesticides so that they would not damage our clean water resources.

I look forward to the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Questions and comments? Response? The member for Oak Ridges–Markham.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I certainly want to thank my colleagues in this House for their comments.

Thank you to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk for reminding us about the activist approach our government has taken to protecting the environment. Yes, indeed, we really didn't have sufficient time to detail all that the

McGuinty government has done in terms of environmental protection.

To the member from Toronto–Danforth, you are always someone who is very ambitious in the goals that you wish to see our government achieve and the targets that you promote. It's certainly good to have those comments. We had public hearings. We heard from many, many groups, and I think what we heard was that we needed to have a balanced approach. Certainly there's an understanding that water conservation is essential. There is the requirement and the interest of industry to see their businesses expand. But we have to take a prudent, balanced approach as we move forward, and I think that that's exactly what this bill does.

The member for Northumberland–Quinte West did remind us a little bit about the involvement that municipalities have had in the whole consultation around this bill. We certainly heard some very inspiring stories, especially the city of Guelph, the region of York, the city of Toronto and the region of Durham in terms of the innovative approaches they've taken to water conservation and what they see as their very substantial savings in terms of their investment in conservation.

We are convinced that this is an excellent—

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you for the opportunity to address Bill 72. I really should say thank you to the people of Ontario for all of us to get the opportunity to address and to debate this piece of legislation, the Water Opportunities Act.

I see today is November 17, so we're six days in from Remembrance Day, and I'm sure many of us in this Legislature were given a microphone on Remembrance Day or perhaps the weekend before or even at a dinner afterwards, where we had an opportunity to remind ourselves that people did fight to the death so that we would have the opportunity to stand up here and present our views and to have some gentle criticism, as we have seen so far. As we all know, this doesn't happen in a number of other countries.

For all the fanfare, especially in the early days, with the introduction of this Water Opportunities Act, which, interestingly enough and coincidentally, was introduced right about on the 10th anniversary of Walkerton, there were some very high expectations last spring on what was coming and what this was supposed to be delivering. I'm afraid that at this stage—we're now in third reading—it has turned out to be somewhat underwhelming.

We did have a day of consultations, as we heard in the earlier debate this afternoon, and we've been left with a water bill, McGuinty's water bill, that, as I mentioned, was timed to be introduced on the 10th anniversary of Walkerton.

When you look at the legislation, there's not a lot that specifically deals with clean water. Just on that issue of timing, I would note that the timing of the committee hearings for this bill—and this is a bill that has a tremen-

dous interest and impact with respect to municipalities and their responsibilities to deliver water services.

We all, I think, perhaps—green energy was mentioned just a few minutes ago. We're all aware of the disdain that this government has shown for municipal input when it comes to green energy proposals. We have seen the McGuinty Green Energy Act do away with local decision-making powers with respect to siting or anything—

Interjection.

Mr. Toby Barrett: The Minister of Agriculture just piped up. This minister would be aware of the concept of minimum distance separation with respect to siting and with respect to nutrient management. But we have none of that with respect to those 450-foot-high wind towers that one would find in the Minister of Agriculture's riding.

There was some legislation. It got rid of municipal decision-making completely. I guess we shouldn't be surprised to find that government has again moved, with this legislation, to shut down municipal voices on issues directly impacting municipal councillors and the people they represent, in this case, the delivery of water services.

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The reason I'm drawing this to the attention of the House is the scheduling of the public hearings: They were held right in the middle of the municipal elections. No municipal councillors showed up. No clerks showed up. No planning department showed up to testify. I think maybe we got an email from staff somewhere in a municipality somewhere in the province of Ontario. It raises that question: How can we purport to have a water bill that reflects the interests of Ontarians when they don't even allow their local level to have a say? This bill was amended before the newly elected councillors even had a chance to awaken from their victory celebrations.

Thankfully, following a letter to the clerk which was jointly signed by our opposition municipal affairs critic, Joyce Savoline, who is here this afternoon, and by myself, I was granted the opportunity to make this point with the following motion at the second day of committee hearings. I'd like to read that motion into the record:

"I move that the Standing Committee on General Government's deliberations on Bill 72, Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act, 2010, be deferred until such time as elected municipal councils are in place and a mechanism for their input to committee deliberations is agreed upon."

In my letter I further noted the committee deliberations with respect to this legislation, again, being held during the time of Ontario's municipal elections, that the act itself impacts directly on water service providers, including municipalities, and that municipal councillors therefore would have limited ability to provide input to committee deliberations aimed at amending the bill. And this was the case: Nobody showed up.

In a final attempt to bring some sense to the proceedings, I went on to explain that, as we continued with our

deliberations and discussing amendments, the input we received from other organizations—in fact, during the hearings we did not receive any input from municipalities; it was from other organizations. I don't know whether the government has had the ability to pass that information back to the municipalities and whether municipal councillors have had the time to digest that over the past several weeks, because they have been very busy with other things.

There were municipal elections right across the province of Ontario. I know next door to my riding the Six Nations of the Grand River just completed their municipal elections. They re-elected their chief. That would have been last Saturday. Other things have been on their minds. I not only commend our municipal affairs critic, Joyce Savoline, for co-authoring that letter, but I also make reference to the member for Leeds–Grenville, MPP Steve Clark. He added—this was on committee—that during his conversations with municipal hopefuls in his area, as he said, and I quote, "Many had no idea about Bill 72."

Unfortunately, Speaker, I think you can appreciate what I'm going to say. My requests fell on deaf ears, with the government committee members refusing to take time for municipal representatives on the election trail to comment on this water bill and how it impacts them; most importantly, not so much how it impacts them but how it impacts the people that they represent. The impact is a direct impact, and you can put a dollar figure on it. This government has yet to tell us what that dollar figure is. I heard similar sentiments from Bill Murdoch, our representative for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

So despite these concerns, government committee members voted unanimously to reject any further opportunity to allow municipal input to committee deliberations over what we commonly now refer to as the McGuinty water bill. And this is so important, this opportunity. We have the opportunity, as I mentioned earlier, to debate. We have the right. We have the freedom of expression. Free speech is important, and there are subtle ways of freezing people out. As I mentioned, people have fought to their death for these freedoms. You don't impose censorship in this society. You don't impose censorship in a very subtle way. Unfortunately, it does agree—there are many ways to try and counter someone who has views with which you do not agree. There are various levels of intimidation. I feel that it's wrong. If you want to get your message out, you need to let others do the same.

A case in point: Last night, MPP Randy Hillier and myself drove down to Hamilton to hear a lecture at the Chedoke Presbyterian church. The speaker was Christie Blatchford. There were protestors in the lobby. This was on Mohawk. I know one member here would know where that church is. I guess there were maybe a dozen demonstrators in the lobby of the church as we came through. There were no problems. We were expecting problems, after what happened at the University of Waterloo, where Christie Blatchford was not allowed to

speak. To their credit, the University of Waterloo—the public relations person and their president—have made it very clear they want Christie Blatchford to return, and they will make sure that she has an opportunity to get up on the stage with no swastikas and no cries of racism.

As far as last night—it was a great evening, and with respect to the demonstrators, they were polite. As I indicated, if you want to get your message out, you need to let others get their message out as well. One message I was handed by one of the groups—it's a Six Nations solidarity group. I can read this. It's a little yellow flyer: "Hey, Christie Blatchford, do you understand that refusing to talk about legitimate land claims at the site of Douglas Creek Estates is racism?" That was the message I was given. That's their view; I disagree with that view. I invariably find out that when you—

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm telling Julian Fantino what you say.

Mr. Toby Barrett: In fact, I just heard a comment from the Liberal side, and I do find that in many cases when a Liberal or a left-winger is losing an argument, they call you a racist. That's kind of how it works. Come down to Caledonia some afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Haldimand–Norfolk, I know it's my responsibility to keep you on the bill that we're discussing, and I know you're going to bring it back to that.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Thank you, Speaker. I would like to bring it back.

You know, for this reason alone, that the municipal councillors were frozen out of this process, I will not be supporting this bill. Citizen participation is very important. Community participation, community involvement, is very important. There is a myriad, a constellation, of ways on that spectrum, really that continuum, to freeze people out.

So what are we left with? After one day of committee hearings, we had some people locked out, in my view. What we have here now—it's a water bill that argues for conservation. That's a good thing. But it does little to support the key cause of water waste. It's a water bill that puts in place legislation whose goals could already have been met by previous legislation. As I recall, both government members listed very recent water legislation that they had brought in. We have legislation in place. We have institutions in place. We have the Ministry of the Environment in place, that could be doing this work, rather than perhaps looking at setting up a whole other level of bureaucracy. It's referred to as WaterTAP, a brand new agency—unelected, unaccountable. I'm sure they would probably be required to send an annual report in to the minister once a year. It may come in, say, seven months late, like the Ontario Electronic Stewardship report that we just received. There are a lot of unanswered questions.

Again, would one more piece of environmental legislation—you know, we heard some of the list already—to add to the seven pieces of environmental legislation that have previously been passed by this

government, the constellation of regulations and rules and red tape, and the costs—the costs that will be measured by business, by small business, by industry, companies that will have yet another piece of legislation with which they will have to struggle to comply.

1700

I'd like to look at the legislation with respect to some of the regulatory hoops that our industries have been forced to jump through since this government came in. I know the members tried to remember all the environmental bills that they have passed, but they missed an awful lot of them.

They didn't mention the Adams Mine Lake Act.

Bill 133—I refer to that as the spills bill. That's the Environmental Enforcement Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005. We call it the spills bill. Some people call it the spill-and-bill—you send a bill.

The Clean Water Act: I think that was mentioned.

They didn't mention the Toxics Reduction Act. Toxins can have an impact on water, not only on air and land.

They did not mention the Cosmetic Pesticides Ban Act. I would remind the government members that they brought that legislation in with respect to their worry—perhaps they felt the federal government wasn't doing enough to keep pesticides out of water.

They did mention the Lake Simcoe Protection Act.

There was no mention of the cap-and-trade legislation.

Now we have the Water Opportunities Act. I just—don't ignore some of the suffocating aspects of, for example, the species-at-risk law, which would be under MNR, and of course the economic insanity of the Green Energy Act.

You start adding these up—I've only named a smattering of laws—and there is a cumulative effect when you operate in isolation, bill by bill, and there's little doubt in my mind that with each piece of additional legislation and, of course, the inherent regulations that are always sure to follow—undebated—close behind, there is a cumulative effect that piles cost on top of cost; it piles paperwork on top of paperwork, and enough red tape to suffocate industry and business alike, particularly small business. They do not have the horses to deal with the myriad of regulation that comes along with legislation like this.

With the introduction of the Water Opportunities Act, this government has now brought forward, at my count, anyway, eight such environmental acts, notorious for their associated regulation: eight successive environmental bills alone, which leads to that cumulative effect, smothers economic activity and kills jobs. Taxes kill jobs. Red tape kills jobs as well, something we have to recognize. Bureaucratic, unnecessary regulation can kill jobs; at minimum it takes the fun out of running a business or running a farm and, for many people, that's kind of the last straw to pack it in.

Now, before I dig into some of my thoughts further on this cumulative effect of the McGuinty water bill, I'd like to read something that came in very, very early when this legislation first surfaced, when this first came forward, a

submission from the Canadian petroleum producers, and I would like to quote it. They go by the handle CPPI.

“CPPI understands the government’s priority for seeking to support the development of water technology. We believe existing water regulations and water management initiatives in Ontario could be used and enhanced to achieve the goals of sustainable water resources management and transparent costing and accounting of water use, and that these dimensions could avoid the need for a new water bill,” in their view. But here we are debating a new water bill, Bill 72.

They went on—this is the petroleum institute—to point out their concern that “additional legislation runs the risk of creating duplication, inconsistencies, or fragmentation of water regulation and initiatives with other existing provincial water legislation. Both members of the government gave us a list of the other existing water legislation and regulations.” Development and demonstration of technology does not require an act—you don’t need legislation to foster technology—“and could alternatively be implemented through improvements to Ontario’s public sector assets. Innovative water management technology developed for a global market could be developed using existing mechanisms, such as those managed by the Ministry of Research and Innovation or through private investments.”

I think I mentioned earlier that we do have a Ministry of the Environment. It’s there itself to oversee safe, clean water in Ontario. During testimony at the hearings on this legislation, the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Contractors Association noted that we don’t need another whole new level of bureaucracy by creating the umbrella organization of WaterTAP, Bill 72’s version of a mega-LHIN. That’s my concern with respect to WTAP.

So if you read this list of environmental legislation when it comes to water, there is a similarly lengthy record of water-related bills, both our government’s—we passed water legislation as well—that have been brought forward over the last number of years, water legislation that was not mentioned by the government: the Nutrient Management Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act—I mentioned the so-called Adams Mine Lake Act—the spills bill, the Clean Water Act, the Lake Simcoe Protection Act, the Sustainable Water and Waste Water Systems Improvement and Maintenance Act. Add to that the water bill.

The overregulation this government has hoisted on our business, our industry and our economy really seems to have no purpose other than to ramp up the cost of doing business in Ontario, and in the end it costs all of us. It costs all of us in time, it costs all of us with respect to money and jobs, and it forces businesses to either pay up or shut down or move out. Regrettably, especially with our manufacturing industries, we have seen a number of industries choosing the latter two options of late.

It is somewhat ironic that in briefings on this government’s “open for business” bill, we were told that the legislation aimed to harmonize legislation with federal,

provincial and municipal levels. I would applaud that measure if it wasn’t for the fact that this government has made a practice of duplicating other government initiatives. I think of the pesticides legislation. Ottawa already had that kind of legislation. The Toxics Reduction Act: Ottawa is already looking after that. Cap and trade legislation: Why are we in Ontario doing what the federal government is in place to do? And now this water bill: Again, through debate, I would like to determine to what extent this duplicates things that the federal government is doing. The federal government also has a role with respect to water, particularly with respect to native communities.

I can tell you that on this side of the House, after seven years of cumulative legislative and regulatory impacts, I think it’s time for a change. It’s time for a culture change, if you will: a change in the culture of government, a change in the culture within the Ministry of the Environment itself. With some of the legislation that has been mentioned this afternoon, we saw draconian legislation that focuses on punitive measures. Invariably the legislation has a list of fines. Invariably the legislation empowers officers of the government to enter property without a warrant. No talk of incentives. It’s always the stick; no talk of the carrot.

1710

This province, at present, is awash in something like 500,000 regulations. That’s according to the Toronto Star. I would rarely quote the Toronto Star. I will quote, actually, Satinder Chera, Ontario director of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, who says, “For too long, governments at all levels have been oblivious to the negative consequences of too much regulation on the job-creating small business sector...”

During the first-ever red tape awareness week, the CFIB released a fairly comprehensive report revealing that Ontario businesses spend nearly \$11 billion a year to comply with government regulation—\$11 billion in compliance costs. To what extent that compliance is with respect to environmental legislation—I don’t have a breakdown. That’s something worth looking for.

Just to continue what Satinder Chera stated: “There is a higher level of accountability when it comes to government taxation and spending policies. Not so with regulation.... Most governments still do not quantify the impact of regulation which, needless to say, has created a big accountability deficit.” It also contributes to a pretty large government deficit that we’re seeing today, and businesses, unable to keep up with many of the costs of red tape, close up shop for good, closing down their businesses. It’s inevitable. We’ve lost those taxes, we’ve lost those jobs, and we see a further downward spiral, an economic tailspin that’s been going on now since 2008, certainly down in my riding, in the Hamilton area—actually just about anywhere between Buffalo and Detroit, if you go across southern Ontario.

I find it somewhat ironic that this bill is advertised and is purported to create jobs. It doesn’t speak about tax cuts. It makes no mention of the hidden costs—and there

will be costs—and yet it purports to be creating jobs. I don't think I have to tell you that this government, because it really should be drilled into them, for the results that we've seen over the last seven years—but it's a well-known and historically proven fact that increased red tape, increased fees, increased taxes kill jobs; tax cuts create jobs.

I feel the jury is out as far as whether this kind of environmental legislation, on top of all the other environmental legislation, is a job-creating program. It may create some government jobs.

As far as the cost, we couldn't get answers on the cost. I know there was a private member's bill that seemed to be the forerunner of this bill that really presented some very significant costs to people. People are going to perhaps get the same kind of shock when they open up their water bill that they're getting now with their electricity bill.

When it comes to the price tag for improving water in Ontario, the most we seem to get out of this government is that the cost savings gained by not wasting so much treated water would, over the long run, cover the cost. It's interesting that this bill and this government—they talk a game on conservation, they attempt to hit the right buttons in indicating that people in Ontario use close to double the amount of water used by Europeans, but when it comes to the biggest challenge—conservation—I don't see a lot in this legislation.

We hear the minister talking about the importance of fixing our aging and leaking water mains—and I'm sure this government has been hearing that for the last seven years—that waste something like 25% of the water that flows through them. But when it really comes down to it, I'm not sure if this legislation is going to have much impact on that. Investment money would have impact on that.

It does allow for regulation requiring municipalities to develop water conservation plans. But the bill is silent on where the billions of dollars would be raised to replace or upgrade the tens of thousands of miles of water pipes. So this is mandated for municipalities. They've just come out of their municipal elections. I don't know whether they know about this or not.

Having somewhat of a plan, that's all well and good, but if nobody is prepared to foot the bill, let alone tell us how much the bill is—you know, the stimulus funding announcements are pretty well over with. That transfer of federal and provincial money to prop up the municipalities to maintain municipal government jobs, that era is pretty well over. I have yet to see evidence of where there were many real jobs created by the stimulus funding. Arenas were built and some roads were paved, but we're not seeing it reflected in employment figures, certainly not in the province of Ontario.

If nobody is prepared to foot the bill, this legislation is really somewhat of a paper tiger. Again, if the municipalities are tasked with preparing plans, plans on costing—costly plans, if you will—the government will see to it that it's you and I who will be putting up the money for

that, those of us in the province of Ontario who use water. That's just about all of us. If that's the case, I question the government's approach of hiding behind orders for municipal plans and such instead of simply admitting the truth: that we want our infrastructure improved. If conservation is important to government, as this government would have us believe, then we will be paying a price. We will be the ones who will be getting the bill. We are the ones who will be getting McGuinty's water bill.

I think this quote is attributed to the minister, and I'm not sure which environment minister this is. He had to say, with respect to infrastructure and related conservation improvements, "About a third of municipal water is being lost to leaks ... so if you come for (provincial) funding, you have to show you have a water sustainability plan in place to make sure the water that you've got within your system is being used as efficiently as possible." Now, what funding pot the minister is referring to here, I don't know—funding for upgrades, funding for health, social services? Is the government going to hold all the provincial transfers hostage until they see a plan? Again, where does the money come from? Who pays for this plan? There are a lot of questions out there. During the course of debate, maybe we will get some answers to that one.

Now, while the government will tell us costs will be paid through conservation itself, I do know that the Premier has really stonewalled—well, did stonewall the media, stonewalled myself during question period when asked to comment on the price of the McGuinty water bill. My personal tally came in at something like: three questions, zero answers regarding new water and carbon taxes poised to take more money from the pockets of people in Ontario. When I say, "the people of Ontario," I guess the short form is "peeps." I had no idea what a peep was. We understand the Premier uses that term. I'm still not sure what a peep is, but I'd better not go there.

There's a news release I put out. My question went something like this: "Dalton McGuinty clearly has no difficulty raising taxes after looking Ontario voters in the eye and telling them that he wouldn't raise them without their explicit consent. He had no inner bell go off when he said that the HST will be revenue-neutral, knowing that it would 'be an increase in taxation.'"

Following on that, my question: "Premier, how much will your water tax take out of the pockets of Ontario families?" No answer to that question.

1720

Later I noted that when the media asked a direct question themselves about the water tax, Dalton McGuinty refused to rule it out. According to the member for Don Valley East—that would be that private member's bill—the water tax will cost families \$50 a month. That's almost double the \$350 increase to power bills that Dalton McGuinty brought in since taking office.

I was met with further silence on a subsequent question: "How much do you think Ontario families have in their pockets to take away with all of these Dalton

McGuinty tax increases?" Two questions; again, zero answers.

I put this in a news release—a final attempt, based on the facts: “Ontario families, as we know, are already hit with tax increases on televisions”—as the minister will know, for a large television it’s \$26.25—“iPods, electronics, electricity, gas, HST, plastic bags, all since the 2007 election. They can now look forward to Dalton McGuinty implementing a carbon tax.” I know that the member for downtown Toronto, the former mayor of Winnipeg, was tweeting at that time to rally support for the Premier’s job-killing carbon tax. Again, I received no direct answer to that question.

To the question, “What will it take for you to respect Ontario families and stay out of their wallets?”, I was basically told that my concerns about taxing, whether it’s water or carbon, are short-sighted. I feel that there is some short-sightedness here. It is short-sighted to ignore the costly realities of attempting to raise a family or run a business in this province without taking these costs into consideration. Government policy has to go beyond just scrambling and running to get those green headlines or to get on the 6 o’clock news.

We’ve seen this story play out again and again. We’ve seen this film before. It always ends up at the same final scene: few results and a hefty bill to be paid by the taxpayer.

Energy sector: the continued refusal to consider anything resembling clean air technology on coal generating stations in the province of Ontario. We’re going to run out of electricity probably in the year 2016. No new contract has been signed for nuclear. In 2016, some of those existing units are going to have to be shut down. I don’t know whether anybody here is going to be around in 2016. We’re going to run out of electricity.

I constantly ask the fellows who are on strike at US Steel, “How many windmills does it take to run a steel mill of this size? How many solar panels does it take to run a steel mill of that size?”

We just got started on the cleaning up of coal generation. We invested a quarter of a million dollars in both Lambton and Nanticoke for SCRs, selective catalytic reduction units, which take out nitrogen. Low-sulphur coal was already present at both plants. In addition, Lambton had scrubbers.

Nobody on the government side would pick up any interest at all from federal initiatives with respect to carbon dioxide capture and sequestration technology. Even though we have a bill supposedly based on technology, technology does not have a place with respect to this government’s energy policy. That’s a little scary, especially during this time of very high unemployment; supposedly frozen salaries, unless you’re in a government union; fixed incomes; we had hearings on pension legislation this afternoon; and a very shaky jobless economic recovery, if it can be called a recovery. We’ll hold our breath on that one.

I’d guess I could go on about the obfuscation on the other side, the confusion that seems to be purposely shipped out.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I may leave some of this to you because I only have 20 minutes left. I couldn’t cover it in that.

Given what we’ve seen with the energy side of the equation, I shudder to think what this Premier really has in store for us when the McGuinty water bill is not only legislated and passed, but once people start getting hold of that bill. It’s unfortunate that we have to dwell on the negative side of what’s happened to Ontario’s economy.

Maybe, on a much happier note, I will draw everyone’s attention, anyone who was watching the news last night, to the announcement of the engagement of His Royal Highness Prince William to Catherine Middleton. I think that’s just wonderful. I can just imagine the sentiment in Great Britain, which is in more dire economic straits than we are in North America, so far. I certainly extend my best wishes. Really, Speaker, on behalf of Her Majesty’s Parliament of Ontario, we would wish to send our sincerest congratulations to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who eventually will be giving royal assent to this legislation—the Queen of Canada, the Queen of Ontario—and His Royal Highness Prince Philip on this happy occasion. God save the Queen.

Thank you for allowing me to make that statement. In fact, I’d like to acknowledge a bit of guidance on that from Alex Roman, protocol officer for issues like that.

Back the legislation at hand. I would suggest that the key to a good water plan—I know there was a call for a plan—is really economics. It may not necessarily be passing a lot of regulation and passing laws. From what I see proposed in this legislation, it is more of a demand-management approach rather than a supply-oriented system that we now have in use. The government plan is something akin to basically, “Don’t charge according to what people can pay; charge according to what government feels water is worth.”

Granted, we all know that water does have an economic value. It’s true value is somewhat skewed, depending on how it’s being used or where you live in the world, for that matter, but water does have an economic value. I fully recognize that a water-pricing policy can achieve more sustainable patterns of water use and can go a long way to continue to generate the kind of technology that is necessary for the future. We all understand, everyone in this Legislature understands, that clean water is essential. It’s essential to the health of Ontario. It’s essential to the health of the people in Ontario. It’s essential to the health of our economy. It’s essential to our prosperity; that’s very basic. Water is an essential element. All concerned I think would agree that it’s worthy not only of our protection but also our promotion.

There’s little doubt the international community—I think this was referred to earlier—is beginning to put a much higher value on water and the importance of water, the importance of clean water. I sincerely hope that this legislation is not just another patch on a patchwork of water legislation that we see not only across Ontario but

across this country. There is concern. There is a patchwork of both federal and provincial legislation and guidelines and regulation, let alone the municipal involvement. I'm concerned that with the advent of yet another bill, it may add to this problem. We already have issues with fragmentation. We have turf wars. We have issues with passing the buck, especially when we consider where the billions of bucks are going to come from to essentially fulfill the stated objectives of some of this legislation.

1730

On top of cost concerns, the Water Opportunities Act leaves another question: Why is government creating yet another crown agency? I mentioned earlier that the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association had plenty to say about this issue. They were not in favour of this. They presented a brief, and I quote:

"We do not see the benefit of developing a new corporation with the objects of promoting the development of Ontario's clean water sector....

"The province of Ontario and the federal government have already put millions of taxpayers' dollars into institutions across the province with a sole mandate of commercialization. Places like MaRS"—Speaker, that would be just half a block behind your chair, at College Street and University Avenue and a little to the east; it would be the southeast corner, if we really want to get specific about that—"and many other centres of excellence across the country already exist, are up and running and are capable of providing commercialization functions as outlined in Bill 72. They are capable of developing, testing, demonstrating and commercializing innovative technologies. They are capable of expanding business opportunities on a global scale. They are also capable of providing the forum for governments, academic institutions and the private sector to exchange information on how to make Ontario a leading jurisdiction in the development and commercialization of innovative water and waste water technologies."

During clause-by-clause, I tabled an amendment with the committee on this very issue. I guess it goes without saying that I was overruled by government members on that committee.

But I have to remind members of the foreboding lessons that we're learning from unelected government agencies, whether it's Waste Diversion Ontario, various stewardship organizations, the LHINs, or OLG. We already have OCWA, the Ontario Clean Water Agency. Why is this legislation bringing in yet another unelected, potentially out of control, potentially unaccountable agency? We already have a ministry; we have a minister. We have the Ministry of the Environment to foster these objectives.

I don't know whether our present water technology companies—we have some great companies in the province of Ontario. A number of them keep getting bought out by larger foreign-based companies, which move their operations to places like Hungary, for example, but we have these companies. Why would

present industries require legislation? Do they need a law to improve and to build on what they already do very well? They innovate. Why do they innovate? Because they're in business. They innovate to compete. They innovate to meet market demand.

Also on committee—I think the minister mentioned the environment industry association in the province of Ontario. They obviously recognize the importance of innovation, innovation in that particular sector of water management that so many of them are involved in wading in as private sector, solving the kinds of problems that the rest of us can't deal with, that government is not in a position to deal with. The environment industry association had a concern that when the research dollars are going to flow through legislation like this, there may be an assumption of, "Let's send the money to universities." There is a relatively poor track record, on many occasions, where those research dollars in academic institutions very often do not lead to any successful commercialization. I agree with their position. I spent 20 years working for a research organization. We brought forward a number of patents for certain drugs. That really wasn't our core business. Companies, themselves, are in a much better position to take those limited, scarce resources, research dollars, and bring them out on to the market and create a commercial success.

As far as the protection of our drinking water supply and water safety, I think of our former government, of which I was a member. For decades, really, there has been a commitment in the province of Ontario for a continual enactment of water legislation and water regulation. We have put forward, amongst other bills, the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act. This was about eight years ago. We put forward the Safe Drinking Water Act. We committed, obviously, to fulfilling all of the recommendations of the O'Connor report. We made the commitment to the Walkerton centre of excellence.

It concerns me that it took seven years for this government to finally come up with some sort of an approach to water conservation and water-related infrastructure. There have been something like seven or eight anniversaries of Walkerton that this government could have jumped on, as they did to garner the headlines they did last spring in announcing this particular bill to coincide with the eighth anniversary of Walkerton. That's seven missed opportunities.

The government's commitment becomes questionable, in my mind, when you consider that it delayed debate on this legislation. We went through the summer. There seemed to be no urgency. It's like the commitment—or lack of commitment—to a new Waste Diversion Act. That was promised to be delivered something like five weeks, as I recall, before the end of the last session. Yet again, no urgency to deliver on their commitments. Promises were made with respect to a new Waste Diversion Act. The previous minister and the present minister have not introduced it.

The twiddling of thumbs: We've seen the eco fee debacle over the summer; more recently the revelation

that the McGuinty government is meeting only 2% of its recycling targets. We've seen the electronics tax, which became nothing more than a tax grab under the guise of environmentalism, in my view. Seven months after it was legislated to do so, Ontario Electronic Stewardship released their annual report—seven months later, in contravention of the waste diversion legislation itself—indicating that the program was collecting \$44 million in eco fees on electronics and only achieving 2% of its recycling targets. That's what the people of Ontario got after paying \$26.25 for a television set.

As I noted in the Legislature on Monday, with a program achieving only 2%, I have a goat that could do a better job of recycling than that. Truth be told, I actually had a goat. The neighbour's dog ate my goat. It was actually my wife's goat. It was named Pepper. I had other names for it. Never, ever buy a goat, although it's good training for politicians. If you want to know how to handle issues, buy a goat. But I used to watch that goat eat peeling paint on one of our buildings—lead-based paint. Now there's recycling. That dog probably has a very high concentration of lead after eating my wife's goat.

1740

Anyway, Ontario Electronic Stewardship: The executive director indicated that this year, on a more positive note, the program has already seen a 110% improvement so far in its second year. We know they only came in at 2% of the recycling, and if I do some quick math, I guess we're looking at about a 4% success rate. I never got a mark like that in school; I can tell you that. So we're very worried.

We hear about the often-touted green strategy of this government. I hope it's not merely more bloat, more growth in the bureaucracy, less results achieved for people in Ontario. I am concerned that I perhaps see the putting of ideology before environmental and economic policy.

This lack of urgency is evident in the fact that over the last seven years, the government already had a piece of legislation that entrenched the notion of full-cost recovery for waste water and water services; they had it in their back pocket, thanks to the previous government. The question remains: What happened to Bill 175?

Bill 175 was known as the Sustainable Water and Sewage Systems Act. It passed third and final reading. It received royal assent December 13, 2002. Again, the question: What happened there? That was seven years ago. It was never acted upon. I know we've seen a lot of red tape over those years, additional hurdles for people in Ontario, for small business to clear to essentially keep their head above water. What we did see over the past seven years were seven other pieces of environmental-related legislation. This one is number eight.

The one that started with the, in my view, curiously titled Adams Mine Lake Act—I remember that debate well. On our side of the House that legislation was known as the “no landfill in Liberal ridings act.” As I say, it was curiously titled. Before 2003, before that

election, no one realized there was a lake in Ontario named Adams Mine. We knew there was an open-pit mine. It was an iron ore mine that was developed by the then Dofasco corp. They hauled iron ore down to Hamilton using the Ontario Northland Railway.

It was during David Peterson's time in office, in 1989, that the Adams Mine site—it's about six miles southeast of Kirkland Lake—was first proposed as a possible landfill for Toronto's garbage. I use this as an example. It's symbolic of the hoops, the brick walls that can be thrown up. In this case, the proponent was a Mr. Gordon McGuinty, distantly related to our Premier. He reported that the project would create 88 full-time jobs, 55 railway jobs; landfill revenue projected at \$575 million over 20 years; rail revenue to the north, \$160 million.

What have we got? Something like 350 trucks a day carrying thousands of tonnes of Toronto garbage down the QEW, the 403, the 401, one way or another, past London, over the border, south of Detroit—a very inefficient way. It creates trucking jobs, I suppose. It's certainly not as efficient as rail haul.

The spills bill—this may have been mentioned earlier. With Adams mine, they put one guy out of business, and his business associates. In this case, this government set their eye on an entire sector. The spills bill was introduced on October 27, 2004. I wish I had more time, Speaker. This is probably one of the worst cases of what we are concerned about. It focused on penalties, not prevention; it focused on sticks, not carrots; administrative penalties—I think they call them environmental penalties—all of this in contrast to what this government's own advisory committee had recommended. We had a spills bill. Essentially, if you were involved in a spill, you'd get a bill—no incentive, no interest-free loans, nothing positive as far as ensuring compliance.

I know I'm not going to get any more time, Speaker, so I'll have to wrap up.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I want to thank the critic for the opposition for his thorough canvassing of the issues that are before us today, and, unfortunately, the reality that one should not put a lot of faith into Liberal bills. He spoke very directly. I don't agree with everything he had to say, but I think, unfortunately, it is quite wise to not take these bills at face value, to criticize and question whether or not, in fact, concrete, positive results will come out of this particular exercise.

The member went through his experiences in dealing with the Liberal government, went through his critique of whether or not they actually deliver, and, frankly, he found them wanting. Some might say that that's simply partisan bias, but unfortunately, the record is there.

We are at a time when major decisions about policy in this province are being made on the basis of public opinion polling and on saving seats or winning seats rather than based on what have been declared in the past to be the principles of the government.

It's fascinating to me that the Oakville gas-fired power plant was described, one day, as indispensable and those

who opposed it as fully not understanding what goes on with the need for electricity in this province, but once the polling was done, it was decided to dispense with it, to defenestrate this gas-fired power plant, because, indeed, at least one seat would have been lost.

The front page of the *Toronto Star* this morning—a 10% cut in hydro rates. I've been here in question period regularly, hearing about the absolute critical need for those higher prices, and yet today the government threw its principles overboard. Interesting, Speaker, very interesting.

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

Mr. Wayne Arthurs: I've spent the last hour listening to the leadoff from the member from Haldimand-Norfolk as critic for the official opposition. Let me just say that, in spending that hour, I think there's a very fundamental difference between the McGuinty Liberals and the Hudak Tories, and it came out on behalf of the opposition because the member opposite is speaking on behalf of his party.

Much of his time was focused on how taxes kill jobs, regulations kill jobs. That was a repeated refrain: punitive measures, being awash in regulations. Well, the McGuinty Liberals think that dirty coal kills people, that dirty water kills people, that pesticides kill people. That's the fundamental difference in the approach that we're taking. We believe that you need the type of legislative framework that protects people for themselves, their families, their neighbours, their children, and their grandchildren. People's lives are more important than killing jobs. That's the fundamental difference. It's a fundamental belief.

1750

We passed legislation, a number of pieces, and the member opposite was bemoaning the fact that we passed a number of pieces of legislation, on the environment. If you look at those as a comprehensive package, they're intended to do a variety of things, not the least of which is to protect individuals and their families, their health and their lives, but at the same time build economic opportunity.

This legislation is going to build economic opportunity. When the Conference Board of Canada estimates the global market for water technology at over \$400 billion, with annual growth of 15%—

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

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: I listened while the member from Haldimand-Norfolk spoke, and I want to tell you that he has a very good grasp on the issue. I totally agree with him that it was inappropriate and ill-timed to bring this bill forward at a time when the stakeholders that have the biggest stake in engaging in whatever results out of this bill were left out because of the municipal election and all the activities that the candidates were involved in. It was left up to the staff, with lame-duck councils, to deal with. I think it's unfortunate that this government chose to continue with this bill at this awkward time.

Do you know what? We in this PC caucus support clean water. We support it, and there's a track record for that. We enacted all the recommendations of the O'Connor report. We committed to a centre of excellence in Walkerton—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Order.

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: The hassle that we're getting from the other side of the House is because they think they can take credit for anything good that has happened in this province. You don't have a record over the last seven years. You have been riding on the coattails of other governments.

Some eight years before Minister Caplan's bill would be enacted, which would cost residents a \$600 increase in their water bills—all you're doing is bringing forward ideas that have a price tag attached to them, and the residents don't know it. They simply think that this is in the name of good water. You have to provide information to residents.

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

Hon. John Wilkinson: I have a very simple question to our friends in the Progressive Conservative caucus on this bill, the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act. What are you opposed to? Is it water or is it conservation or is it opportunity? On this side of the House, you would think that this bill would receive the support of all members of the House.

I remember the members opposite voting against the "you spill, you pay" bill. We said to the people of Ontario, "If you spill something, if you put it in the water, and it costs other people money, you've got to pay for it because you spilled it. It shouldn't be the victims down the river." Boy, they were against that.

Then we actually brought in the Clean Water Act, and who voted against the Clean Water Act? What part would you not agree with? Was it the clean part or the water part of it? I can't believe that your party ran on implementing all of Justice O'Connor's recommendations. A great deal of that was contained in the Clean Water Act, and then you turn around and vote against it.

This place is very clear. We have a very long memory. This is a piece of legislation that I would have thought was non-partisan, but no, I find it odd in this place that even when we bring in an act that says that all we need to do is value our precious resource—we are blessed with this resource. We live in a world that is thirsty. We live in a world that has dirty water. There's an opportunity for us to export our expertise—not our water, but our expertise—around the world, leading to good jobs in the province of Ontario. I've crossed the province, seeing the companies here in Ontario that are at the leading edge of technology. There is an opportunity for our children and our grandchildren. One would think that that is non-partisan, but somehow in this House, people can stand up and vote against the Clean Water Act. I understand that they're going to stand up and vote against the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act. My God, this is a very interesting place indeed.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Haldimand–Norfolk, you have up to two minutes to respond.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the feedback.

The member from Toronto–Danforth made reference to saving seats or winning seats. Regrettably, baldly, that was what the Adams Mine Lake Act was all about. That was maybe the first piece of legislation that was brought in back in 2003, and that's when we in this House started talking about not only NIMBYism but also NIMTOOism—"Not in my term of office."

The member for Pickering–Scarborough East talked about the fundamental difference between the two parties with respect to coal generation. They haven't closed them down; there are four there. We asked this government to put some thought into this, to do some research. The plants are run by a government agency. There's a wonderful opportunity to convert those facilities to biomass, for example; biomass in conjunction with natural gas. I think the message has gotten through with respect to using wood at Atikokan.

The member for Burlington reiterated the fact that we did make a commitment to implement, to enact, all of the recommendations of Justice O'Connor with respect to Walkerton. I know that during the Clean Water Act the present government—and I know the minister touts himself as being non-partisan—the first place they went on those hearings was Walkerton. We had hearings on this legislation. Why did you not go to Walkerton with this water bill? When you went to Walkerton the last time, on the Clean Water Act, you were shouted down by a number of the presenters, a number of farmers.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): My trusty pocket watch tells me that I can say that pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), Mr. Prue, in response to an answer from the Minister of Labour, has filed his dissatisfaction. Mr. Prue, you have up to five minutes.

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes, indeed, I am dissatisfied with the answer I got from the Minister of Labour on November 15.

The first question that I asked the Minister of Labour was predicated on a lack of ministerial response to Mr. Katkin and the non-answers to my previous questions on the issue of tip-out, on the same topic, over the preceding number of days on which I had asked them. In response, the minister said he would look into why Mr. Katkin had not been responded to as of that date, after 16 months. He did endeavour to say he would try to do something about

it, and I have heard anecdotally that in fact a letter may have finally been sent to Mr. Katkin after some 16 months.

But the second part of my question was not answered at all, and what was said was extremely irrelevant. I talked about the tip-out practice. The response was all about employees and employment. I asked about the tip-out. What I got was about the employment standards officers and how many more employment standards officers there were. But this is not the issue. Even if there were 10,000 employment standards officers, they couldn't investigate this, because it is not contrary to the law in Premier McGuinty's Ontario. It is not contrary to the law, so it doesn't matter how many employment standards officers there are. The minister knows it, and I trust the parliamentary assistant, who is here to respond to this, knows it as well. It is an irrelevant answer. There's nothing they can do, there's nothing that can be done, until the minister and this government take action.

In the supplementary, I talked about Bill 114 and the banning of tip-outs. The answer I got to that wasn't what they were going to do about tip-outs, whether they were going to ban the practice or change the law. The minister talked about the glories of tourism, how important workers were to give a positive image of Ontario to tourists who are coming here, and that minimum wage increases were somehow the answer to everything that is wrong out there with the employment standards and people being ripped off by their employers.

1800

I would suggest that this is a serious matter that, over and over and over again, the minister and the parliamentary assistant—because I've done this late show before—have ignored. We have received emails, letters, call-in shows, editorials, TV news, magazine polling, and the list goes on and on and on. If I'm getting those, so is the parliamentary assistant and so is the minister.

What I'm asking requires a technical amendment to the bill, and Bill 114 is the vehicle, or if the government doesn't like that, I am more than amenable to them introducing their own bill if they think something is wrong with mine. Do something, do anything, say something, say anything, but please don't give me all this stuff about how wonderful workers are in the province of Ontario.

There are tens of thousands of people who, every day, are getting ripped off. The parliamentary assistant knows it. I know it. This entire House knows it. They are being extorted in the place they work. They are required to hand over the tips that they get to their bosses in order to keep their jobs. That is wrong. It is absolutely wrong. It has been outlawed in other states and in other provinces, and we ought to do the same thing.

I received a letter today from a former page. That page is still 13 years old—I'm not going to use his name. He wrote me the following—

Interjection: How many years ago was that?

Mr. Michael Prue: No, he was a page just earlier this year, right in this very Legislature. It reads:

"I read about your proposed amendment for the Employment Standards Act, 2000, in an editorial in my

local paper. I wanted to share with you that I agree with your views on the matter. It is unfair for an employer to take employees' money to pay for expenses that should come out of the employer's wallet. I hope your bill passes."

This is a 13-year-old who understands this.

Mr. John Yakabuski: He gets it.

Mr. Michael Prue: If he gets it, why doesn't the minister get it? Why doesn't the parliamentary assistant get it? Why won't you answer the question?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It's my pleasure to rise in the House to discuss the issue which the member once again raises.

Before we actually discuss the hard work that servers do in this province, I want to clarify a point that the member raised in the House yesterday and brings up again today. He stated that a constituent who had written to the Minister of Labour last year on this very issue had not been responded to. Contrary to what he had said earlier in the House today, a signed letter from the minister was sent to the writer back on October 23, 2009. I just wanted to clarify that first, and I know the minister made mention of it today.

I know the member is well aware of the way the process of private members' business is done here. There's a healthy debate taking place, and we respect that process.

Again, I personally want to comment on the servers in this province. They are a vital part of and often the face of Ontario's successful hospitality and tourism industry.

I know that every member of this House has at one time or another been served at a restaurant or bar somewhere in this province.

Our government is well aware that we are living in tough economic times. It's not easy for some of our province's lowest-paid workers to make ends meet. That is why this government has raised minimum wage rates every single year since we took office. Minimum wage in Ontario is now \$10.25. That's the highest minimum wage in Canada. We've increased servers' wages by nearly 50% as well. It was the right thing to do, considering that workers went nine long years with no minimum wage increases whatsoever.

We are proud of our record in raising living standards of Ontario's most vulnerable workers, including restaurant servers.

As I've said before in this House, our government takes very seriously the rights of all employees in Ontario. Workers' rights are protected in this province by the Employment Standards Act. This government has done more to enforce the Employment Standards Act than the two previous governments combined. We've adopted a multi-pronged approach that consists of increased outreach, education, enforcement and prosecution, along with more employment standards officers than ever before.

I know the honourable member also wants to ensure that the employees of Ontario are protected. This is what

the Employment Standards Act does. Employees who are unsure about their rights have the right to contact the Ministry of Labour and file a complaint there.

These investigations allow me to stand in this House and say that this government has done more to enforce the Employment Standards Act. We continue to work hard to improve on what is already an effective approach. Ministry staff members have increased outreach, education, enforcement and prosecution.

My colleagues and I are very proud of our record in raising living standards for Ontario's most vulnerable workers, including restaurant servers. Indeed, I want to thank the member for bringing this issue before the House so we can continue on this very important discussion. There's healthy debate going on now, and we all look forward to all private members' business, as we respect that. I look forward to following up on this matter as it goes through the legislative process.

STEEL INDUSTRY

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Labour. The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, you have to up to five minutes.

Mr. Paul Miller: Yesterday morning, when I asked a question of the Minister of Labour, the answer was, at best, completely unsatisfactory. The minister suggested that his government is standing up for workers, "encouraging and urging the parties to get back to the table." He further said, "We have a seasoned mediator at the table working with the parties, trying to work through this very difficult" situation.

If that's the case, how come nobody's at the table? That's a good start. Why was the government not able to effect the proper response; that is, getting the parties back to the table to negotiate a reasonable contract? For example, United Steelworkers in Lake Erie: This company shut them out for nine months. That's real negotiation; that's real mediation. They were locked out for nine months. Why was US Steel allowed to put the union in this position in the first place? I'll tell you why: Because these governments, Ottawa and the provincial government, are afraid to stand up to this US company. They're nothing but corporate bullies. They've come in and their agenda is to break unions' backs, get concessions from workers, put them in line, pay them \$12 or \$14 an hour, and make more profits, eliminating good-paying jobs in Hamilton—that's their agenda.

Why is this government failing the steelworkers of Hamilton? It makes most opposition MPPs disgusted when the McGuinty Liberals answer a properly posed and asked question with nothing but a bunch of gobbledegook. They don't even afford the basic respect to another sitting MPP of directly answering his question. They don't afford the citizens of Ontario basic respect when they refuse to provide even a simple but forthright response.

This government has had plenty of time to analyze their mistakes in the Lake Erie work situation and to implement a plan to ensure that it doesn't happen again. I guess it's happening again—TSN moment: “Happening again”—but did they do that? No. And when they're questioned about it, we get nothing but the Liberal circle back pat. They all say how wonderful they are and what they've done. They talk about safety and health; they don't talk about the issue.

When the minister suggests that it is their party that continues to encourage all those who have an interest in keeping those jobs in Hamilton and protecting those jobs, it leaves me incredulous and angry—angry for those workers who fought hard for the benefits they've attained by deferring their wages over the last 60 or 70 years. This company is cutting the legs from underneath them. This company has come to Canada and snubbed their nose at our laws—our labour laws and even our contractual law—in Ottawa. They've done nothing to help the workers; the governments have sat on their heels.

Mr. Clement was in Hamilton a few weeks ago and said, “Oh, the agreement is over October 31. The three-year agreement has ended. There's nothing I can do. I feel for you, but there's nothing I can do.” Why didn't he do something in the first three years? And why didn't this government step up to the plate and encourage him to do something in the first three years of the contractual agreement that US Steel signed with the Canadian government and operates in the province of Ontario? They do whatever they want—terrible.

1810

There's nothing to protect it from the ravages of foreign ownership. We don't even control our base industries anymore. This government and the one in Ottawa has sold us down the river. We own nothing in Canada—nothing. We're at their whim. They don't step in and ensure that production of Canadian raw materials remains in Ontario; nothing to keep the Hamilton economy from sinking into its deep abyss.

This ongoing approach to responding to the opposition's questions clearly shows a government out of touch with the everyday Ontarians they are supposed to represent and support.

Just like the grandparents who have stepped up to the plate to raise their grandchildren, I have asked for this late show to give the government a chance to fix their errors, to actually let the unemployed workers of Hamilton know what they will really do to help them. And if you really want to help them, if you honestly want to help them over there, why don't you pass anti-scab legislation?

You turned your backs on the workers of Ontario. You turned your backs on the people of Ontario. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Member for Scarborough Southwest, you have up to five minutes.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I know that this issue is close to home for the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, a former Stelco employee himself. On a

personal note, I'm very proud to say that my father worked at a wood mill for over 35 years and my mother was a cleaning lady for over 15 years. Even through the hardships, I understand and appreciate the dedication of the very hard-working people of Ontario.

First, I would personally like to echo the minister's comments from yesterday. This is a very tough time for workers, working families and the community of Hamilton. I must say that some members seem to think these situations are very simple, that there is one answer to solve everything. We know that this is not true. We know that situations like these are never that simple. That's why there's a process in place. Reaching a negotiated settlement is a shared responsibility for all parties involved.

Our mediator has been assisting the parties at the table, and that's why we are urging and encouraging the two parties to find a resolution. There is Ministry of Labour staff standing by, ready to bring the two parties together, keep them together and help them find a resolution. We're more than prepared and eager to do that. As the member well knows, our focus has always been on working with the parties and helping them work together towards an agreement for both. We believe that the best agreements are reached at the table and that they are the most productive, stable and fair agreements. We're proud of our labour relations record.

I know that the member in that party has a very different view. Back in 1999, when the NDP campaigned on the promise to rebalance labour relations, they introduced the social contract, which was the largest single violation of workers' rights in Ontario history. In 1993, the NDP tore up the contracts of 900,000 unionized workers, including civil servants, teachers, doctors and nurses in Ontario. I say this to remind Ontarians of the way that things were and to beware of the party that says one thing, does another and never has a plan.

As I said, we strongly believe in the collective bargaining process on this side of the floor. Our mediators are available, standing by, ready to help, and they have a tremendous record when it comes to resolving disputes. They assist in discussions and help the two parties come to an agreement, which we believe creates healthy negotiations. We know that's good for everyone. We very much want the two parties to come to an agreement, and I want to underline that.

Along with the Minister of Labour, my colleagues the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, the Minister of Finance and the Premier have all been working hard on this to help deal with this very difficult issue and these very difficult circumstances. The member may recall that this government invested \$150 million to protect the pensions of those workers.

Again, we understand that this is an incredibly difficult time for those workers, their families and the community of Hamilton. It's also important to note that it's a difficult time for business. It's not an easy time for any industry anywhere at this point in time. These are the realities we face today.

Job creation, economic growth, pension protection and productive and stable labour relations remain as a priority for this government. I know that my colleagues will continue to work with the federal government and others who have an interest in ensuring that as many of these jobs as possible are protected in Ontario.

TAXATION

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Minister of Energy. The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, you have up to five-minutes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: “Dissatisfaction” would be mild; “answer” is using the word loosely, because we certainly didn’t get an answer at all. In fact, he skated all around the issue.

Let’s just go back a little bit. The question was with regard to the special purposes fund that the Ministry of Energy instituted with respect to electricity distributors in the province of Ontario. When it first came out, the minister denied that they’d even done it; denied that it existed. They got caught. Then, on November 1 and November 2, in this Legislature, the minister repeatedly said that that fund was gone, that tax was gone; a \$53-million back-door hydro tax was gone. Well, when you speak to distributors in this province, LDCs, it’s not gone at all. There has been no removal of that tax whatsoever. You know what that constitutes, Mr. Speaker, and I can’t say it here.

What we were trying to get today was for the minister to come clean on what exactly is happening here. Because just five days after that—four days, if you count the 2nd—when the minister had repeatedly said, “That tax is gone and it won’t come out on natural gas; it’s gone off of electricity and you won’t see it on natural gas,” the Attorney General was arguing in front of the OEB to keep that tax. Now, why would you be arguing to have the right to keep a tax when the minister said it was already gone? Yet, we find out that it’s not gone at all. It’s a bit of a scary proposition here in the province of Ontario when that’s the kind of thing that is happening here.

Then we find out last week, with this Sussex plan for the government to promote the Green Energy Act or promote their platform—the plan is to confuse citizens across the province of Ontario, confuse hydro ratepayers across the province of Ontario, hoping that they will somehow not catch on to what they’re doing. We’re trying to get some answers, and we get no answers from the Minister of Energy on that issue.

Of course, the speculation tomorrow—speculation; once they have their meeting with the Toronto Star, it’s not speculation anymore. Even though we’re not supposed to hear about those things until the House hears about them, the Toronto Star is already writing that there’s going to be a 10% reduction to people’s hydro

ills. There’s no explanation of how they’re going to do that. Where is the money going to come from? It’s not like generators are going to start charging 10% less. They’re going to have to create deferral accounts of some kind or they’re going to have to put that onto the regular tax bill. They chastised the previous government for freezing hydro rates and putting that deferral account for that money that would otherwise have been collected. So what are they planning to do?

The problem is that these guys are so mixed up and desperate when it comes to the electricity file that they’re saying and doing anything. I don’t even know that the minister knew what the consequences of his answers were on November 1 and November 2, when he said, “We don’t have that account. We’ve gotten rid of that. It’s gone.” We know it’s not gone. I haven’t heard anything in the House of him apologizing to the House for saying that when in fact it was not the case at all. We certainly should be hearing that. But it’s systemic of what’s happening over there as these people become desperate.

They’ve made such a mess of this energy file and put the burden on the backs of those who least can afford it: families and seniors and the like in this province. Now they’re trying to weasel their way out of it by saying, “You’re going to get 10% discount on your hydro.” But it’s like the Fram oil filter guy: “You pay me now or you pay me later.” But that bill is not going to disappear. The people are going to have to pay for it.

1820

But I must say, I am impressed that the minister himself is here for a late show. That doesn’t happen very often. I give him credit for that. Hopefully he’s actually going to stand up here in about 18 seconds and start to give us some answers, not the gobbledygook and the spin-around about how lovely and wonderful they’ve made Ontario, but how they’re actually going to run this electricity system and how they’re going to be accountable and transparent to the people of Ontario. That’s what we need from the minister.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Minister of Energy, you have up to five minutes to respond.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I very much appreciate that. And I appreciate the fact that the member has summoned me to come back to this Legislature today. I had to hurry back because I was in Scarborough late this afternoon, where an announcement was being made to launch the new mall. They’ve refurbished their mall. This has a lot to do with energy, because they’ve invested a great deal to make the Scarborough Town Centre one of the most eco-friendly malls in the country. So I was really happy to be there. I had to race to get back to help out the honourable member here today, but I was happy to do that because, while we do spend a lot of time together, it’s always nice to be able to have a few more minutes to spend chatting and debating some of the important issues that come before us.

The member asked me a question today. It’s a question that he had asked me a number of weeks ago

and a question that I responded to a number of weeks ago. I was very straightforward when I responded to that question: No, we're not moving forward with any kind of a levy or anything like that, like he was referring to. I was very straightforward about it then. He asked me a second time; I responded a second time. Now he asked me again today, and again I can respond the same way.

I don't mind the member wanting further responses. I don't think I could be more straightforward than that. But it gives me an opportunity as well to talk a little bit about what conservation is all about, because what the member was referring to was resources that are required to drive our conservation initiatives—initiatives that, when that party was in government, didn't exist. They didn't do conservation; nothing. They didn't believe in conservation. They didn't understand that the return that you get from conservation is very substantial. The rate of return, in fact, for conservation is greater than any investment you can make in the energy field. So it's something that's very important if we're to accomplish our goals, not just as a government but as a generation, to build a clean, reliable and strong system of energy that's going to have enough power to meet our demand.

I'm looking forward to bringing forward the long-term energy plan. That's a 20-year energy plan that will be in place for the people of this province. It's an update to our original plan. That's something that is unique to government. It's something that shows that we're really thinking through how to ensure that this province does have a strong, reliable, modern and clean energy system. It's a plan that will lay out to Ontarians where we've been, where we are and what challenges are before us to get us where we need to go so that we can pass on this stronger, more reliable, more modern, cleaner energy system to our kids and grandkids down the road. I think that's a responsibility not just for our government but it's a responsibility for our generation.

I think it's unfortunate that the member opposite and his party don't support the efforts we're making to build

that stronger, more reliable, cleaner system of energy. They don't support the efforts we've made to build a world-class system of conservation here in this province. We've gone from one of the worst provinces in North America when it comes to conservation to one that is seen North America-wide as a leader. We've gone from a province that was relying on dirty coal—in fact, under that government, the use of coal had gone up 127%. Just a few weeks back, I had the privilege of announcing the closure of four more coal units four years ahead of schedule.

We're working hard to build cleaner air and to bring about healthier outcomes for ourselves and our kids and grandkids. Closing down coal by the year 2014 will be the single largest climate change initiative in all of North America. We will be one of the first jurisdictions in world to be able to say that we have completely gotten out of coal. What's the result of that? Cleaner air and healthier outcomes for our kids and grandkids. That's something Ontarians should be very proud of. That's something that Ontarians should rally around, and they are.

I'm looking forward to bringing forward this long-term energy plan, because we have our economic statement coming forward tomorrow. We're looking forward to ensuring that we can put all of this together to ensure that Ontarians can see exactly where we're going, from a cost perspective, from an affordability perspective, from a supply perspective, from a reliability perspective and from our opportunities to build a cleaner province of Ontario.

I thank the member for the question and I thank you for sitting and listening. I look forward to tomorrow's events.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried.

This House is adjourned until Thursday, November 18, at 9 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1825.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	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
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, M. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldip (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans 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) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka 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, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R (LIB)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB) O'Toole, John (PC) Oraziotti, David (LIB) Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB) Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB) Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Durham Sault Ste. Marie Oshawa Kitchener–Conestoga Elgin–Middlesex–London Scarborough–Agincourt	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Beaches–East York Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Ramal, Khalil (LIB) Ramsay, David (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Ruprecht, Tony (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Savoline, Joyce (PC) Sergio, Mario (LIB) Shurman, Peter (PC) Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord London–Fanshawe Timiskaming–Cochrane Northumberland–Quinte West Davenport Guelph Burlington York West / York-Ouest Thornhill Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Charles (LIB) Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP) Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Vaughan Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Carleton–Mississippi Mills Toronto–Danforth Mississauga–Erindale	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex Perth–Wellington Simcoe–Grey	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) Yakabuski, John (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Toby Barrett
Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Norm Miller
Leeanna Pendergast, Charles Sousa
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Steve Clark, Helena Jaczek
Kuldip Kular, Dave Levac
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
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permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
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la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Reza Moridi
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
Bas Balkissoon, Joe Dickson
Sylvia Jones, Amrit Mangat
Norm Miller, Yasir Naqvi
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
Wayne Arthurs, M. Aileen Carroll
France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**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
David Caplan, Kim Craiton
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

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